NATION

India to get 26/11 Pak terrorist Rana 'soon'

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RBI permits increase in UPI P2M transaction limit

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SPORTS

RCB vs DC: Interesting personal match-ups on cards

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SALAR

DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

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3 terrorists trapped in Udhampur encounter

JAMMU, 9 APRIL

An encounter broke out in Jammu and Kashmir's Udhampur district on Wednesday after security forces established contact with three terrorists, officials said. "During a search operation by police and other security forces, contact was established with terrorists at village Jopher in the Ramnagar police station area of Udhampur," the Udhampur police said on X. They stated that two to three terrorists are trapped. Police and security forces have been tracking terrorists moving from one area to another for the past 17 days following three encounters since the operation started on March 24 in the Sanyial area of Kathua district. Two terrorists and four policemen were killed in the encounter in the area on 27 March. *—PTI*

Indian banks win UK bankruptcy appeal against Mallya

LONDON, 9 APRIL

A consortium of Indian banks, led by State Bank of India, has won a significant legal victory in the UK, as the High Court upheld a bankruptcy order against Vijay Mallya. The case, centred around a debt owed by Mallya's now-defunct Kingfisher Airlines, has been ongoing for several years. High Court Judge Anthony Mann ruled in favour of the banks, dismissing two applications by Mallya, who is wanted in India for fraud and money laundering. The ruling confirms that the bankruptcy order against Mallya stands, following an appeal heard in February.*—PTI*

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Hindu grps shut shops in Delhi's fish market

NEW DELHI, 9 APRIL

Fish sellers of Chittranjan Park found themselves in a state of disbelief last week when the anti-meat overdrive of the Hindu right hit the local markets with a warning to shut shops because they were close to a temple. Incredulous, some of the shopkeepers claimed they were the ones who built the temple in the first place. A video that captured a member of the saffron brigade making a case before the shopkeepers for the shutdown.*—PTI*

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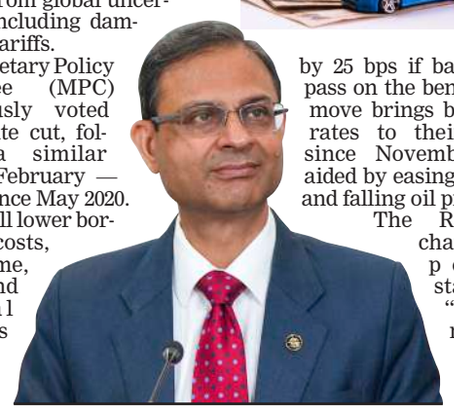
RBI cuts repo rate to 6% as US tariffs risk growth

This is the 2nd cut in a row; GDP downgraded to 6.5%

MUMBAI, 9 APRIL

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) reduced interest rates for the second consecutive time on Wednesday, lowering the repurchase (repo) rate by 25 basis points to 6per cent to support economic growth under pressure from global uncertainties, including damaging US tariffs.

The RBI lowered inflation projection to 4% for 2025-26



The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) unanimously voted for the rate cut, following a similar move in February — the first since May 2020. The cut will lower borrowing costs, with home, auto, and personal loan EMIs expected to decrease by 25 bps if banks fully pass on the benefit. This move brings borrowing rates to their lowest since November 2022, aided by easing inflation and falling oil prices.

The RBI also changed its policy stance to "accommodative," signalling the potential for further rate cuts. Governor Sanjay Malhotra noted that the rate reduction came on the same day the US imposed additional 26 per cent tariffs on Indian exports, exacerbating economic uncertainties. Some economists predict these tariffs could shave 20-40 basis points off India's GDP growth this fiscal year.

The RBI downgraded its economic growth forecast to 6.5 per cent for 2025-26, from an earlier 6.7 per cent, and lowered its inflation projection to 4 per cent from 4.2 per cent. Malhotra highlighted global trade frictions, including the impact of tariffs, as major factors dampening growth prospects.

The RBI Governor also acknowledged the risks of global uncertainties on inflation, particularly from potential currency pressures and imported inflation. However, he indicated that the slowdown in global growth could reduce commodity prices, helping curb inflation.

Malhotra, who took office in December, has adopted a more growth-friendly approach, pivoting away from the inflation-focused policies of his predecessor, Shaktikanta Das. Since taking charge, he has injected more than $80 billion into the banking system, aiming to stimulate credit demand, investment, and job creation. *—PTI*

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PHOTO: PTI

China slaps 84% tariffs on US as trade war begins

WASINGTON, 9 APRIL

The United States and China have reignited a major trade war as both economic giants announced sweeping new tariffs this week. President Donald Trump's latest round of tariffs took effect just after midnight Wednesday, imposing a baseline 10 per cent levy on nearly all US trading partners, with significantly higher rates on certain countries. China faced a combined 104 per cent tariff—adding a new 34 per cent on top of previous levies and a threatened additional 50 per cent.

In immediate retaliation, China raised its tariffs on US imports to 84 per cent, up from 34 per cent, effective Thursday. The Chinese government condemned the US move as a violation of World Trade Organization (WTO) rules and filed a formal complaint. It also added six US firms to its "unreliable entity list" for ties to Taiwan and placed 12 more companies on its export control list, citing national security concerns.

The escalating tariff battle reflects deepening tensions not only in trade but also in geopolitical relations, with Taiwan emerging as a flashpoint. China's State Council released a white paper blaming rising US protectionism for undermining bilateral trade ties. As both sides dig in, global markets brace for prolonged instability and economic fallout. *—PTI*

>>>More on Pages 3,5,6 & 7

India buys 26 Rafales for Rs 64K cr

NEW DELHI, 9 APRIL

The Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday cleared a proposal to procure 26 naval variants of Rafale fighter jets from France at a cost of around Rs 64,000 crore for deployment on board aircraft carrier INS Vikrant, sources in the defence establishment said.

IAF also bought 36 Rafale aircraft in fly-away condition ***PHOTO: ANI***

The delivery of the jets will begin around five years after the signing of the contract under an inter-governmental framework between India and France.

In July 2023, the defence ministry accorded the initial approval for the mega acquisition following a series of deliberations and evaluation tests of the platform.

Under the deal, the Indian Navy will also get associated ancillary equipment including weapon systems and spares from Dassault Aviation, the manufacturer of Rafale (Marine) jets.

Indian Air Force bought 36 Rafale fighter aircraft in fly-away condition.

In July 2023, India and France announced a raft of ground-breaking defence cooperation projects including the joint development of jet and helicopter engines.

In the same meeting the Cabinet also approved the doubling of the 104 km-long Tirupati–Pakala–Katpadi single railway line section in Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu with a total cost of approximately Rs 1,332 crore, the government said on Wednesday. *—PTI*

AI flyer urinates on fellow traveller on Bangkok flight

NEW DELHI/ MUMBAI, 9 APRIL

An Air India passenger allegedly urinated on a fellow traveller during a flight from the national capital to Bangkok on Wednesday.

Air India, in a statement, said that an incident of "unruly passenger behaviour" was reported on its Delhi-Bangkok flight on Wednesday and the matter has been reported to the authorities (DGCA).

Civil Aviation Minister K Rammohan Naidu said the ministry will take note of the incident and speak to the airline.

"If there is any wrongdoing, we will take necessary action," Naidu said on the sidelines of an event in the national capital. *—PTI*

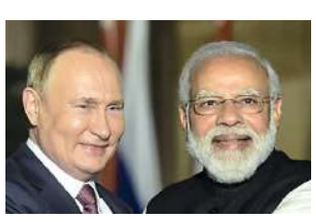
Crude oil prices hit 4-year low

Crude oil prices have fallen for the fourth consecutive day, plunging to an all time low in four years as the US-China trade war escalates. China, the world's largest oil importer faces 104 per cent import duties. Brent crude futures have declined over 19% to $60.41 per barrel, while West Texas Intermediate futures plunged 20% to $57.06 per barrel.

RUSSIA INVITES MODI FOR VICTORY DAY

MOSCOW, 9 APRIL

Russia has invited Prime Minister Narendra Modi to attend the 9 May celebrations marking the 80th anniversary of victory over Germany in World War II, Deputy Foreign Minister Andrey Rudenko has said.



Moscow is expecting the Indian Prime Minister at the 9 May parade. The invitation has already been sent and the visit is being worked out, Rudenko was quoted as saying by the state-run Tass news agency. *—PTI*

Yadgir cop rapes girl for 2 yrs, forces abortion

YADGIR, 9 APRIL

A police constable Balarama, attached to the Saidapur police station in Yadgir's Gurumatkal, is accused of raping a minor girl for over two years and coercing her into abortions. The victim, now 18 years old, filed a complaint at the Yadgir women's police station on Wednesday.

According to her statement, the constable approached her when she was 16, professing love and subsequently engaging in sexual exploitation under the pretense of marriage for two years. The victim further alleged that when she became pregnant, Balarama forced her to take pills that led to an abortion.

In December 2024, after she turned 18, the constable reportedly married her at the sub-registrar's office. Following this, the victim stated that Balarama tied her up in a temple and then abandoned her, denying any relationship by saying, "You and I have nothing to do with each other."

He also denied any relationship with her, saying, "You and I have nothing to do with each other." Seeking justice, the victim and her family have approached the police. A case has been registered against Balarama under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act. *—Salar News*

RJD's Manoj Jha moves SC against Waqf Act

JAMMU, 9 APRIL

- The RJD petition argues that the amendments infringe upon fundamental rights under Articles 14, 15, 21, 25, 26, 29, 30, and 300A,

Two Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) MPs—Dr Manoj Kumar Jha and Faiyaz Ahmad—and the National Conference (NC) have challenged the constitutional validity of the Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025 in the Supreme Court of India. NC spokesperson and legislator Tanvir Sadiq confirmed that, under the direction of party president Farooq Abdullah, the party will file a writ petition, calling the law an "alarming interference" in Muslim religious affairs.

The RJD petition argues that the amendments infringe upon fundamental rights under Articles 14, 15, 21, 25, 26, 29, 30, and 300A, diluting protections for waqf properties, erasing the concept of "waqf by user", and allowing state overreach. It also objects to mandatory inclusion of non-Muslims in Waqf Boards and restrictions on Scheduled Tribes converting to Islam from creating waqfs.

Sadiq stated that NC will fight this legal battle on behalf of every Muslim affected, condemning the Act's potential to damage religious freedom, equality, and minority rights. Over 10 petitions, including those by MPs from the DMK, Congress, AIMIM, and AAP, are now before the court. *—PTI*

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'CAN'T TAKE AWAY RIGHT TO PROTEST'

'Waqf Act will lead to Shaheen Bagh like protest'

BENGALURU, 9 APRIL

> **The NDA government succeeded in enacting the new Waqf Act, but they cannot take away the people's right to protest against it** —K Rahman Khan, former deputy chairman of Rajya Sabha

Former deputy chairman of Rajya Sabha, K Rahman Khan, an authority on Waqf matters, led two Joint Parliamentary Committees in 1999 and 2008 to look into the functioning of Waqf boards. In a chat with **Salar News,** Khan says, "The NDA government succeeded in enacting the new Waqf Act, but they cannot take away the people's right to protest against it."

Q. *Are bigger protests than the Shaheen Bagh agitation —when women staged a dharna from December 2019 to March 2020— after the Citizenship (Amendment) Act in the offing?*

A. The mood in the Muslim community is to protest. I feel it will be bigger than the Shaheen Bagh protest because the issue now is the community's survival. Sometimes, agitations have yielded results. It might have become an Act now, but the Centre cannot take away the people's right to protest. I only hope the judiciary will understand our concerns and deliver justice.

Q. *Why did the BJP rake up the Waqf issue?*

A. The approach of the BJP government is to create conflict between Hindus and Muslims. Creating conflicts is a good subject for the BJP, and by doing so, they can divert people's attention from development activities, where we are behind. For 13 years, there was no talk about the Waqf, nor was it discussed in the media. Why all of a sudden now? After the Waqf issue, they will find another subject to engage people in controversies.

Q. *BJP's argument to repeal earlier Acts was that they lacked transparency in Waqf property management. Do you agree?*

A. I don't agree. What is new in the Act now that wasn't there in the earlier laws? I agree that the Waqf boards have been mismanaged, but mismanagement is not confined to Waqf boards—many other institutions in the country are in shambles. Giving that as the reason, one cannot change the entire law. It's an open truth that Muslims have not managed the Waqf boards, and some people in the community have grabbed lands belonging to the Waqf. The new Act takes away the character of lands donated as Waqf. One such example is that after 12 years, a person who has encroached upon Waqf land can automatically become the owner, and in the event of a dispute, the government can step in and declare it as its own.

Q. *Are you disappointed by the stance of so-called secular parties, who supported the Act?*

A. There was some regard for the so-called secular parties, though they were allies of the NDA government. When we saw their justification for supporting the Bill's passage, they don't deserve any respect now. *—Salar News*

Rahman Khan ***PHOTO: SALAR***

Yatnal booked for derogatory remark against Prophet

VIJAYAPURA, 9 APRIL

An FIR has been filed against Vijayapura BJP legislator Basangouda Patil Yatnal for allegedly making derogatory remarks about Prophet Mohammed during a Ram Navami celebration in Hubballi on Monday. Mohammed Hannan Sheikh lodged a complaint with the GoI Gummat police, alleging that Yatnal insulted Islam and the Prophet in his speech at Bani Oni. Sheikh claimed that Yatnal falsely stated that Prophet Mohammed was born in the late Shiv Sena supremo Bal Thackeray's house, calling the remarks baseless and provocative.Sheikh further argued that Yatnal's speech could mislead society and distort history. He called for charges against Yatnal for attempting to disrupt religious harmony and hurting Muslim sentiments. Police video recordings of the event reportedly show Yatnal, delivering the provocative speech. *—Salar News*

Objections raised over film shoot in Bandipur Reserve

MYSURU, 9 APRIL

Residents, environmentalists and several activist groups have expressed strong disapproval of the government's decision to allow a Kerala film crew to shoot at Himavad Gopalaswamy Temple, located within the ecologically sensitive Bandipur Tiger Reserve in Gundlupet taluk, Chamarajanagar. District Farmers Federation President Hangala Madhu, environmentalist Joseph Hoover, and State Rajya Raitha Sangha leaders, including Madrahalli Mahadaevappa, condemned the decision. They said that, since 2016, the forest department has restricted private vehicle entry to the temple premises, permitting only government buses and forest department vehicles. The activists argue that such film shoots threaten the region's flora and fauna, disturbing wildlife in the tiger reserve. I He stated that the shooting took place solely within temple premises, not inside the forest area, where activities are restricted.*—Salar News*

Spl train to run from Nanjangud to Mysuru till 12 April

MYSURU, 9 APRIL

South Western Railway will run special unreserved trains between Mysuru and Nanjangud from 9 April to 12 April, 2025, for the convenience of devotees attending the Pancha Maharathotsava (Dodda Jatre). Train No 06225 will depart Mysuru at 1pm, arriving in Nanjangud at 1.50pm. In the evening, Train No 06226 will depart Nanjangud at 7pm, reaching Mysuru at 8pm. The 23-coach trains will stop at Chamarajapuram, Ashokapuram, Kadakola, Thandavapura, and Sujatha Puram Halt. *—Salar News*

City to revise water tariffs by 0.15 paise

The new rates will be issued on 10 April

BENGALURU, 9 APRIL

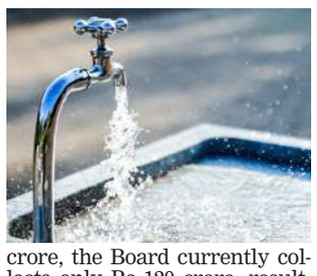
The Bengaluru Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) is set to revise water tariffs to offset its ever growing expenditure, said Chairman Ram Prasath Manohar on Wednesday.

An official order notifying the new rates will be issued on 10 April, he added.

Speaking to the media at the BWSSB headquarters on Wednesday, Manohar said Bengaluru has witnessed rapid growth in both population and geographic spread over the past decade.

BWSSB, an autonomous body without government subsidies, relies heavily on water charges as its primary source of revenue, he said.

According to him, despite a monthly expenditure of Rs 200



crore, the Board currently collects only Rs 120 crore, resulting in a monthly deficit of Rs 80 crore.

Under the domestic category, the proposed tariff hike includes an increase of 0.15 paise per litre, for up to 8,000 litres. For 8,001 to 25,000 litres, an increase of 0.30 paise per litre and between 25,001 and 50,000 litres, an increase of 0.80 paise per litre and above 50,001 litres, an increase of Re 1 per litre are proposed.

For high-rise domestic buildings, till 2,00,000 litres, an increase of 0.30 paise per litre is proposed. While 2,00,001 to 5,00,000 litres, will see an increase of 0.60 paise per litre and above 5,00,001 litres, an increase of Re 1 per litre.

For non-domestic usage, a flat hike of 0.90 paise per litre is proposed for bulk usage. While up to 10,000 litres will cost Re 1 per litre more and from 10,001 to 25,000 litres, Rs 1.30 per litre. Between 25,001 and 50,000 litres, an increase of 1.50 paise per litre is proposed. For 50,001 to 75,000 litres, there will be an increase of 1.90 paise per litre.

But for 75,001 to 1,00,000 litres, the hike is only Rs 1.10 per litre and above 1,00,000 litres, it is Rs 1.20 paise per litre, said Manohar. The revised tariff will reflect in bills issued from May onwards. *—PTI*

MISQUOTED, SAYS CM'S AIDE

'Didn't say State No. 1 in corruption'

BENGALURU, 9 APRIL

Basavaraj Rayareddi, Economic Advisor to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, on Wednesday clarified that he never stated that State is "number one in corruption" under the current Congress government.

Rayareddi's clarification comes after reports emerged that he made the claim during a review meeting for addressing regional imbalances in Koppal. According to the reports, he had allegedly told officials that State tops the country in corruption. However, Rayareddi denied this, saying the media had misrepresented his words.

He explained that he merely pointed out the perception that "Karnataka is branded as the most corrupt state," which he described as unfortunate. He emphasised that this perception had developed over the last two to three decades, during which corruption had been a long-standing issue. He did not blame the current government but acknowledged that previous BJP and JD(S) administrations had contributed to this image of the state.

Rayareddi further praised Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's leadership, stating that the administration was fair and efficient, with strong support from ministers like Krishna Byre Gowda and Priyank Kharge. He also defended the current Congress government's work, affirming his unwavering support for the CM regardless of his position. *—PTI*

Cops in a tizzy over Rs 14 cr fake notes

SIRSI, 9 APRIL

The police in Uttara Kannada have gone into a tizzy after they found fake currency notes of Rs 500 denomination worth Rs 14 crore from a house in Dandeli with 'movie shooting purpose only' written on them. Police searched a rented house at Gandhinagar in Dandeli on Tuesday and confiscated the fake currency notes along with a money-counting machine. Arshad Khan, who is said to be from Goa, was staying as a tenant in the house belonging to Noorjan Jhunjuwadkar, police said. Police were informed after ownerr noticed that Khan had been absent from the house for the past month. The fake currency notes had the 'Reverse Bank of India' printed on them. *—Salar News with Agencies*

Govt to bring in new law for online betting

MANDYA, 9 APRIL

Home Minister G Parameshwara on Wednesday said the government will be bringing in a new law aimed at regulating online betting and gambling.

Speaking to reporters here, he said, a committee of senior officials and industry representatives has been constituted and it has been given a month's time to submit a draft of the proposed bill.

"I chaired a meeting regarding online betting and gambling yesterday along with the IT Minister. Representatives from the industry were called. There is nothing to regulate them so far. They have agreed to the introduction of a licence system and a regulation as per law," Parameshwara said.

Parameshwara **PHOTO: PTI**

"Once the draft is submitted, we will bring in a new law," he added.

Minister for Information Technology and Biotechnology Priyank Kharge had last month said that the government is mulling over bringing the entire online gaming, real money gaming under a legal parameter. *—PTI*

Man arrested for raping teenage daughter in Gadag

GADAG, 9 APRIL

The police have arrested a man for allegedly raping and impregnating his minor daughter in Gadag.

The matter came to light on 7 April after the girl, 16, was taken to a hospital by her mother after she complained of swelling in her legs.Medical tests revealed her to be 31 weeks pregnant. On confrontation by her mother, she revealed that her father, 51, had been allegedly sexually abusing her over the past year when she was alone at home. He had also threatened her with dire consequences if she revealed it to the family, a senior police officer said.

The girl has been given counselling and further decision will be taken after a thorough medical examination. *—PTI*

Rs 18 lakh gone in 48 minutes: ATM robbed in Ramanagara

KALABURAGI, 9 APRIL

Some unidentified miscreants made away with Rs 18 lakh in cash within 48 minutes after allegedly breaking open an unguarded SBI ATM here using a gas cutter in the early hours of Wednesday, police said.

The incident occurred around 4am near Ramanagara within the city limits, they added.

According to the police, after entering the ATM kiosk, the miscreants allegedly sprayed black paint on the CCTV cameras. They then broke open one of the two ATMs using a gas cutter and fled with the cash.The other machine was left intact as it did not contain any money.

The incident occurred around 4am near Ramanagara within the city limits **PHOTO: SALAR**

A senior police officer said the ATM had been loaded with cash around 6pm on Tuesday. Police said they are analysing footage from CCTV cameras in the vicinity. There was no security guard at the ATM at the time of the incident. *—Salar News*

SC notice to Trust over land row

NEW DELHI, 9 APRIL

Top State bureaucrats approached the Supreme Court seeking a stay on contempt proceedings in the High Court for allegedly not complying with a 2017 verdict.

The verdict directed the return of over 350 acres of land to the Jamnalal Bajaj Seva Trust, situated on the outskirts of City.

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, representing State Principal Secretary Manjunath Prasad and eight other officials, informed the bench that a compliance affidavit had already been filed by the State government, but contempt proceedings were still being pursued.

A bench comprising Justices

Bela M Trivedi and Prasanna B Varale issued a notice to the Trust, whose land was taken over by State authorities under the State Land Reforms Act, 1961, on the grounds that it was "excess land."

Sibal argued that since the compliance affidavit had been filed, framing contempt charges would be unwarranted. The Supreme Court suggested informing the High Court that the matter was before it and requested that the contempt hearing be deferred.

The State High Court had, on 1 July, 2017, quashed an order from the City North Land Tribunal, which had declared 354 acres and 10 guntas of the Trust's land as surplus. The High Court restored possession of the land, stating it did not fall under the land ceiling provisions.

The Trust, which has been involved in various charitable activities such as rural development, education, and health initiatives, had acquired the land in the 1940s for its Vishwaneedam International Sarvodaya Centre. *—PTI*

PEACOCKS NEAR ULLAL LAKE

Peacocks wander near the Ullal Lake in search of water, as their only source of water has dried up amid scorching heat **PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD**

Electric short circuit damages 100 homes in Yadgir

YADGIR, 9 APRIL

A powerful gust of wind in Jalibenchi village, Yadgir, caused a severe electrical accident, leading to a fire that damaged nearly 100 homes on Tuesday around 6pm. The accident occurred near an old transformer by Mallikarjuna Temple, which supplies power to half the village.

The electric wires connecting the transformer to the poles had been hanging loose for years, despite repeated requests from villagers to replace them. The strong winds caused the wires to become tangled, creating a shock circuit that spread across the power lines. This sparked multiple fires, causing significant damage as flames engulfed homes and electrical appliances.

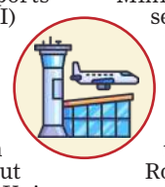
Residents reported the loss of TVs, fans, refrigerators, air coolers, and other household items, with damages estimated to exceed Rs 1 crore. *—Salar News*

Residents reported damages estimated to exceed Rs 1 crore **PHOTO: SALAR**

LEGISLATORS WANT 2ND AIRPORT IN SIRA

BENGALURU/ TUMAKURU, 9 APRIL

Even as the Airports Authority of India (AAI) inspects three shortlisted sites for City's proposed second airport, there is growing support for the airport to come up at Sira in Tumakuru district, about 120 km from City, with Union Minister of State V Somanna lending his voice to the demand.



38 legislators have signed a petition addressed to the Chief Minister and the Union Minister, urging them to select Sira as the site for proposed airport.

State government has already shortlisted three potential locations for the airport, two on Kanakapura Road near Harohalli and one on Kunigal Road in Nelamangala. The proposed airport is expected to be operational by 2032. *—PTI*

Nanjangud celebrates car festival

MYSURU, 9 APRIL

The Sreekanteswaram car festival, also known as the Gowthama Pancha Maha Rathotsava, was celebrated with great religious fervour in Nanjangud on Wednesday. The rathotsava took place during the auspicious Meena Lagna between 5.15am and 5.40am, attracting a sea of devotees from across the State. Devotees offered hannu-javana to the chariots as the idols of Ganesha, Subramanya, Chandikeshwara, Parvathi, and Sreekanteshwara were paraded in separate chariots around the temple along the car street.

The event began with a pooja performed by Agamik Nagachandra Deekshith, followed by Nanjangud MLA Darshan Dhruvanarayan breaking a coconut in the presence of City Municipal Council President Sreekantaswamy. The chariots, weighing up to 110 tons and reaching a height of 90 feet, were pulled by devotees chanting slogans, covering a distance of 1.5 km.

People participate in the Srikanteshwara temple car festival at Nanjangud in Mysuru district **PHOTO: PTI**

Devotees hoisted Kannada flags featuring images of late actor Puneeth Rajkumar and RCB cricket team flags, praying for team's victory in IPL matches. Mass feeding and food distribution by various organisations added significance to event. *—Salar News*

BJP, Hindu group block highway over assault by police

MANGALURU, 9 APRIL

BJP and several Hindu organisations staged a highway blockade in Bhatkal on Wednesday, protesting against the alleged assault of a Hindu activist by the Superintendent of Police (SP) of Uttara Kannada district.

The protest, which started late on Tuesday, continued into the early hours of Wednesday, as demonstrators demanded action against SP Narayan.

According to BJP leaders, Srinivas Naik, associated with a Hindu group, was assaulted by the district police chief on Tuesday evening.

BJP leaders accused the Congress-led state government of targeting party workers and Hindu activists, claiming false cases were being filed and activists harassed. *—PTI*

RS 11,101 CRORE DEBT

Indian banks win UK bankruptcy appeal in Vijay Mallya case

LONDON, 9 APRIL

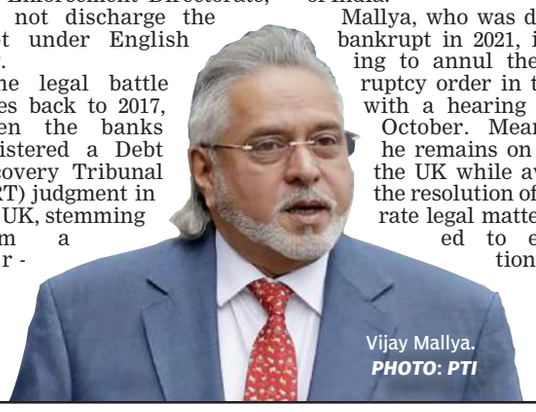
A consortium of Indian banks, led by State Bank of India, has won a significant legal victory in the UK, as the High Court upheld a bankruptcy order against Vijay Mallya. The case, centred around a debt owed by Mallya's now-defunct Kingfisher Airlines, has been ongoing for several years.

High Court Judge Anthony Mann ruled in favour of the banks, dismissing two applications by Mallya, who is wanted in India for fraud and money laundering. The ruling confirms that the bankruptcy order against Mallya stands, following an appeal heard in February.

The banks' legal representatives, TLT LLP, stated that the ruling was significant as it affirmed the banks' position on security and clarified that Mallya's assets, attached by the Enforcement Directorate, did not discharge the debt under English law.

The legal battle dates back to 2017, when the banks registered a Debt Recovery Tribunal (DRT) judgment in the UK, stemming from a personal guarantee Mallya had provided for Kingfisher Airlines loans. It pertains to at least Rs 11,101 crore debt to lenders, including State Bank of India.

Mallya, who was declared bankrupt in 2021, is seeking to annul the bankruptcy order in the UK, with a hearing set for October. Meanwhile, he remains on bail in the UK while awaiting the resolution of a separate legal matter related to extradition. *—PTI*



Vijay Mallya. **PHOTO: PTI**

Court halts probe against Mishra in 2020 riots

NEW DELHI, 9 APRIL

A Delhi court on Wednesday stayed an order for further investigation against Law Minister Kapil Mishra over his alleged role in the February 2020 riots, deferring the matter until 21 April. The decision by Special Judge Kaveri Baweja came after Mishra challenged a 1 April ruling by Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate Vaibhav Chaurasia, who had found a prima facie cognisable offence and called for further inquiry. The court also issued notice to complainant Mohammad Ilyas, instructing him to respond by the same date. The Police opposed Ilyas' plea, asserting that Mishra had no involvement and that his role had already been examined in the larger conspiracy case. *—PTI*

J&K House adjourned sine die over Waqf row

JAMMU, 9 APRIL

Uproar over the demand by non-BJP parties for a discussion on the new Waqf (Amendment) Act paralysed proceedings for the third consecutive day in the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly, which was adjourned sine die on Wednesday. Speaker Abdul Rahim Rather defended his action of disallowing the adjournment motion by some National Conference members and its alliance partners on the Waqf issue and also disallowed a no-confidence motion moved against him by three opposition members led by Peoples Conference leader Sajad Gani Lone, citing business rules and technicalities. According to the revised calendar, Wednesday was the last day of the Budget Session. *—PTI*

Girl dies in S'pore fire; Pawan Kalyan's son hurt

SINGAPORE, 9 APRIL

A 10-year-old girl has died and 20 others, including Andhra Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan's son, were injured after a fire broke out in a Singapore shophouse offering children's enrichment classes. The blaze erupted at a three-storey building on River Valley Road on Tuesday morning. Six adults and 16 children, including seven-year-old Mark Shankar, were rescued. Mark sustained burns to his hands and legs, and suffered smoke inhalation. Construction workers nearby helped evacuate the children using scaffolding. Eyewitnesses described children unconscious, burned and covered in soot. The Singapore Civil Defence Force extinguished the fire within 30 minutes, evacuating 80 people. Authorities said foul play is not suspected. *—PTI*

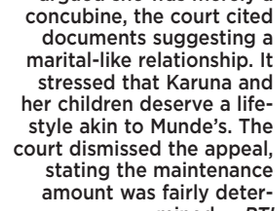


PHOTO: PTI

Munde must pay aid to woman he denies marrying: Court

MUMBAI, 9 APRIL

A sessions court in Mumbai has ruled that NCP leader Dhananjay Munde's relationship with Karuna Munde is "in the nature of marriage", entitling her to relief under the Domestic Violence Act. Munde, who denied being married to Karuna, had appealed against an interim maintenance order. The court, however, upheld the magistrate's decision, noting that Karuna bore two children with Munde and likely shared a household with him. On 4 February, the Bandra court ordered Munde to pay Rs 1.25 lakh monthly to Karuna and Rs 75,000 for their daughter. While Munde's lawyer argued she was merely a concubine, the court cited documents suggesting a marital-like relationship. It stressed that Karuna and her children deserve a lifestyle akin to Munde's. The court dismissed the appeal, stating the maintenance amount was fairly determined. *—PTI*

Only India, US had an understanding: EAM on tariffs

He says impact of reciprocal tariffs is not yet known

NEW DELHI, 9 APRIL

The impact of US President Donald Trump's reciprocal tariffs is not yet known and New Delhi's strategy to deal with the situation is to firm up a bilateral trade pact with Washington by fall of this year, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Wednesday.

In first detailed response to the US policy on tariff, Jaishankar said India is perhaps the only country to reach an understanding with Washington to seal a trade deal after Trump assumed the presidency for the second time.

His comments came hours after Trump's sweeping tariffs against around five countries including India came into force triggering massive trade disruptions and fears of a global economic recession. India is among the countries that have adopted a cautious approach in reacting to potentially seismic action, saying it is engaged with the Trump administration on the bilateral trade agreement (BTA). The two countries are negotiating a BTA with an aim to more than double bilateral trade to USD 500 billion from the present about USD 191 billion. They are aiming to conclude the first phase by the fall this year.

Meanwhile, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal asked exporters not to panic and assured them that India is working on the "right mix and right balance" in its proposed trade agreement with the US. He also said the Indian team is working with "speed" but not in "undue haste" to ensure the right outcome for the country.

The two countries are negotiating a BTA with an aim to more than double bilateral trade to USD 500 billion PHOTO: PTI

'India, China moving in positive direction'

India and China are moving towards a positive direction in their ties and work needs to be done to normalise the relationship, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Wednesday.

India-China relations plunged to their lowest point since the 1962 war following the Galwan Valley clashes. Following a series of diplomatic and military talks, the two sides withdrew their troops from several friction points along the Line of Actual Control in eastern Ladakh. *—PTI*

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and UK PM Keir Starmer PHOTO: PTI

India's domestic demand a big magnet: FM in UK

LONDON, 9 APRIL

The resilience of the economy and strength of domestic demand will continue to make India an engine of growth amid the rapidly evolving global trade landscape as a result of US tariffs, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said in London on Tuesday

She also said is India presents a compelling growth opportunity for foreign banks during an India-UK Investor Roundtable in London.

The meeting, attended by around 60 investors from pension funds, insurance firms, banks, and financial institutions, focused on India's economic reforms and investment prospects.

Sitharaman emphasised the Indian government's commitment to reducing regulatory burdens and fostering a business-friendly environment. She noted that India is poised to become the world's sixth-largest insurance market by 2032, with a projected CAGR of 7.1% between 2024 and 2028.

Highlighting India's financial progress, she cited the early adoption of the T+1 settlement cycle and a market capitalisation of USD 4.6 trillion, ranking fourth globally. UK Chancellor Rachel Reeves welcomed deeper collaboration between both nations. *—PTI*

TN to file new case in SC against NEET

CHENNAI, 9 APRIL

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin on Wednesday said that the state would continue to seek legal remedy and challenge it in Supreme Court, if necessary.

He added that the state would continue pursuing the case it filed in the Supreme Court in July 2023 and, if necessary, file fresh litigation against the Centre's refusal.

A meeting of legislature party leaders chaired here on Wednesday by Chief Minister M K Stalin to deliberate an action plan to secure exemption for Tamil Nadu from NEET decided unanimously to pursue all necessary legal steps, including challenging it in the Supreme Court afresh.

The resolution said: "This all party meeting unanimously resolves that the Tamil Nadu government must continuously carry on the legal struggle to secure NEET exemption."

The Tamil Nadu government had in 2023 moved the Apex Court opposing the NEET exam.

"It is not an exam from which the state cannot be exempted and exuded confidence of getting an exemption for the state through legal means," Stalin said, addressing a meeting of legislature party leaders. He recalled that the proposed the anti-NEET Bill was passed on September 13, 2021 but the Governor delayed it and was later adopted again in 2022 which the Centre has now rejected. Tamil Nadu has long expressed dissent to the NEET entrance for admission into medicine saying it disadvantaged poor students aspiring to become doctors. *—PTI*

Leader of Opposition in Bihar Assembly and RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav PHOTO: PTI

School job scam agitators clash with cops in WB

KOLKATA, 9 APRIL

Several districts of West Bengal witnessed widespread protests on Wednesday as a section of teachers and non-teaching staffers, who lost their jobs following a Supreme Court verdict invalidating their appointments, clashed with police during demonstrations.

The protesters alleged they were lathicharged and manhandled by police personnel in Kolkata.

In protest against the police action, BJP MP Abhijit Gangopadhyay cancelled his meeting with Education Minister Bratya Basu called to discuss the ongoing teacher recruitment crisis.

Gangopadhyay was to hand over a letter, addressed to Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, to Basu suggesting the formation of a committee to help find a mechanism to save the jobs of "eligible teachers".

In Kolkata's Kasba area, around 150-200 protesters gathered outside district inspector (DI) of schools' office, demanding their reinstatement.

At least six police personnel were injured.

The Kolkata police said it was compelled to use mild force to disperse the mob and prevent further injuries.

The Supreme Court last week declared the appointment of 25,753 teaching and non-teaching staffers in state-run and state-aided schools as "vitiated and tainted." *—PTI*

'NO DIVIDE & RULE POLICY'

Didi won't allow Waqf Act in Bengal, says will protect Muslims

KOLKATA, 9 APRIL

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday told the Muslim community in West Bengal, which is agitated because of the Waqf (Amendment) Act, that she would protect them and their properties by not allowing the Centre to implement "any divide and rule policy" and in the state.

Speaking in the aftermath of protests against the new Waqf (Amendment) Act which triggered large-scale violence in Murshidabad district bordering Bangladesh on Tuesday, the chief minister said, "I know you are aggrieved because of the enactment of the Waqf Act. Have faith, nothing will happen in Bengal by which one can divide and rule. You send out a message that all have to stay together. Jio aur jiney do (live and let live). You don't need to feel rattled."

Banerjee said, "There are people who would instigate you politically, provoke you to assemble and launch a movement. I will appeal to all of you not to do that. Please remember, when Didi is here, she will protect you and your properties. Do not distrust. Let us trust each and everyone. If we are together, we can win everything. We can conquer the world," she said.

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and Kolkata Police Commissioner Manoj Kumar Verma in Kolkata PHOTO: PTI

- Violent protesters blocked the NH-12 in Jangipur area on Tuesday and police had to use lathicharge and tear gas shells to reign in the rampaging mob, officials said.

Violent protesters blocked the NH-12 in Jangipur area on Tuesday and police had to use lathi charge and tear gas shells to reign in the rampaging mob, officials said. *—PTI*

ANTI-DALIT: RAGA SLAMS BJP AFTER LEADER PURIFIES TEMPLE

AHMEDABAD, 9 APRIL

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday accused the BJP of having an "anti-Dalit mindset" after its leader sprinkled Ganga water at a Ram temple in Rajasthan's Alwar to "purify" it following Congress' Tikaram Jully's participation in a consecration ceremony.

Referring to the incident, Gandhi said in a post in Hindi on X, "Another example of BJP's anti-Dalit and Manuvadi thinking... Modi Ji, the country will be run by the Constitution and its ideals, not by Manusmriti which considers Bahujans as second class citizens."

Congress leaders, including Jully, termed Ahuja's act an insult to Dalits, but the BJP leader denied the charge. *—PTI*

'Young' Tejashwi appeals Bihar to make him CM

PATNA, 9 APRIL

RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav has appealed to the people to make him the chief minister of Bihar, likening the Nitish Kumar government to a 20-year-old car that needs replacement.

Addressing a conclave of the 'Mushar-Bhuyan' community, said to be the most backward even among Dalits, Yadav on Tuesday said "the young should now get a chance".

"All those from the Musahar Bhuiyan community currently living on the roadside, in night shelters or in slums, will be significantly benefited once the Mahagathbandhan government led by RJD is formed... and with your blessings, I become the CM," he said.

Yadav, who was the CM candidate of the Mahagathbandhan in the last assembly polls, also drew a contrast between the government run by his father Lalu Prasad, the RJD president, decades ago and the one headed by Kumar, which he alleged was "indifferent, even hostile towards the poor". *—PTI*

M'rashtra polls were won through fraud: Kharge

AHMEDABAD, 9 APRIL

Alleging that the BJP won the Maharashtra assembly polls through a "fraud" like never before, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Wednesday made a strong pitch for having elections on ballot paper.

Addressing an AICC session in Ahmedabad, Kharge also accused the Modi government of "selling off" government assets to benefit crony capitalists and finishing democracy slowly.

"The whole world is moving from EVMs to ballot paper but we are using EVMs. This is all fraud. They ask us to prove it. You have devised such techniques that benefit the ruling party and put the opposition at a disadvantage," Kharge said.

But the youngsters of this country will rise and "say we want ballot paper", he said. "What happened in Maharashtra? We raised the issue everywhere. Rahul Gandhi raised the issue strongly. What kind of voter list they made? Maharashtra election was a fraud. The same thing happened in Haryana," the Congress president said.

Kharge pointed out that the BJP won 90 per cent of the seats and said this had never happened before.

Meanwhile, A special resolution focusing on bringing the Congress back to power in Gujarat, where the BJP has been in power since 1995, was adopted during the All India Congress Committee (AICC) session here on Wednesday, a party leader said. Titled 'Why Congress is needed in Gujarat', the resolution outlines the party's strategy to get back to power with the motto of "Nutan Gujarat, Nutan Congress' (new Gujarat, new Congress). *—PTI*

I also want to say that those who do not help in party work, need to rest, those who do not fulfil their responsibilities must retire

-Mallikarjun Kharge, Congress president

'NO WORK DONE'

India's GDP numbers are fake: Hotmail head

NEW DELHI, 9 APRIL

Sabeer Bhatia, Hotmail co - founder in a podcast has opined that 'our economic metrics was deeply flawed' and "India's GDP is all wrong,". Criticising the current model for rewarding movement of money rather than meaningful output he called India's GDP 'fake'.

"In India, if I give you Rs 1,000, 18 per cent GST is taxed on it, and you give back Rs 1,000 to me, 18 per cent is counted as Rs 2,000 of GDP. You've done no work. I have done no work. I've just given you money. Giving money is not work."

Bhatia then proposed India's economic output based on actual hours of human effort, not just how much money changes hands.

"In the US, everyone has an hourly rate. You calculate how many hours of effort were put in and report that. That determines GDP," he said.

Sabeer Bhatia, Hotmail co-founder in a podcast opined that Indian economic metrics was deeply flawed PHOTO: YOUTUBE/@SINGHINUSA

He raised concerns about India's engineering education system and work culture, pointing to a lack of hands-on experience, critical thinking, and real innovation. Criticising the glorification of business figures who focus on outsourcing over genuine software development, Bhatia emphasized that for India to become a truly innovative nation, it must rethink how it values technical skills.

Despite the challenges, Bhatia believes India can bridge this gap with the right use of technology. "We can teach critical thinking through an app. Let's encourage problem-solving—real happiness comes from solving other people's problems." *—Agencies*

Cong's Ananthan, crusader for use of Tamil in Parl, dies

CHENNAI, 9 APRIL

Veteran Congress leader and noted orator in Tamil, Kumari Ananthan who fought for and succeeded in ensuring the use of Tamil language in addressing the Parliament has died, his family said on Wednesday.

Ananthan, 92, a 4-time M.L.A and a Parliamentarian once was instrumental in getting the right to speak in Tamil in the Parliament and also was conferred the title "Thagaisal Tamizhar" (eminent thamizhan) by Tamil Nadu Government. A former President of the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee (TNCC), he is survived by a son and four daughters, including senior BJP leader and former Governor of Telangana, Tamilisai Soundararajan.

Kumari Ananthan PHOTO: PTI

Born at Agastheeswaram in Kanyakumari district on 19 March, 1933, Ananthan was elected to Parliament from Nagercoil constituency in 1977 and he is well known for his 'padayatras' rooting for Kamaraj rule (re-establishment of Congress rule in Tamil Nadu) and propagating Gandhian ideals. *—PTI*

11 more miners to get coal mining nod in Meghalaya

SHILLONG, 9 APRIL

Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma has said that 11 more miners will be allowed to begin scientific coal mining in the state. Currently, three miners have commenced extraction with the Coal Ministry's clearance. They are now working on the safe transportation of coal. Sangma noted that within one to two months, an additional 10–11 miners—mainly from East Jaintia Hills and West Khasi Hills—are expected to gain mining approval. On 17 March 2025, coal mining officially resumed in Meghalaya after over a decade, with the virtual inauguration of the state's first scientific mining block in East Jaintia Hills. This marks a shift from unregulated rat-hole mining banned by the National Green Tribunal. —*PTI*

PHOTO: X

Mumbai cops file chargesheet in Saif Ali Khan stabbing

MUMBAI, 9 APRIL

Police have filed a chargesheet in a Mumbai court regarding the January attack on actor Saif Ali Khan at his Bandra residence, officials confirmed on Wednesday. The Bandra police submitted the chargesheet against 30-year-old Bangladeshi national Mohammad Shariful Islam. On 16 January, Khan, 54, was repeatedly stabbed by the intruder inside his 12th-floor flat. He underwent emergency surgery and was discharged five days later. The accused was arrested on 19 January from neighbouring Thane. A knife fragment removed during surgery, along with another found at the crime scene, matched the weapon recovered from the accused. Police told the court that all three pieces belonged to the same knife. Opposing the bail plea, they said the crime was "very serious in nature" and that "strong evidence" exists against the accused.—*PTI*

Workers evacuated post ammonia gas leak at MP factory

RATLAM, 9 APRIL

An ammonia gas leak at an ice factory in Jaora town of Madhya Pradesh on Tuesday night prompted emergency services to evacuate workers and bring the situation under control. The incident occurred around 10.30pm at Porwal Ice Factory. Local authorities responded swiftly. Water was sprayed to neutralise the gas, and the leak was successfully stopped. Sub-Divisional Magistrate Trilochan Gaud confirmed it was an ammonia leak, stating that prompt action by emergency teams ensured there were no major consequences. "Labourers were shifted immediately and the situation is currently under control," he said Superintendent of Police Amit Kumar noted that the initial signs of leakage were detected by police personnel stationed nearby, who acted quickly as first responders. —*PTI*

Residents oppose demolition drive in Jaipur city

JAIPUR, 9 APRIL

The Jaipur Development Authority faced opposition from local residents against the demolition of illegal constructions on a 2.5-km stretch of the Sirsi road here on Wednesday. Retired director general of police Navdeep Singh was taken into custody when he joined the protests as a part of his house was demolished. Bharatiya Janata Party MLA Gopal Sharma reached the spot to protest against the action and got into a tussle with the officials. "There is an atmosphere of terror among the public for the last four days. Work for expanding roads is being done without serving notices. The team misbehaved with women," Sharma alleged. —*PTI*

Accident scheme delay: SC raps govt

Govt is to give cashless treatment to all victims

NEW DELHI, 9 APRIL

PHOTO: PTI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday rapped the Centre over the delay in formulating a scheme for cashless medical treatment to motor accident victims and summoned the secretary of the Ministry of Road Transport for an explanation.

A bench of Justices Abhay S Oka and Ujjal Bhuyan took objection to the Centre not complying with its 8 January order.

"The time granted has expired on 15 March, 2025. This is a serious breach and violation of not only orders of this court but a violation of implementing a very beneficial legislation. We direct the secretary, ministry of road transport and highways to appear on video-conferencing and explain why the directions of this court were not complied with," the bench said.

Additional solicitor general Vikramjeet Banerjee, appearing for the Centre, submitted they were facing "bottle necks".

The bench remarked, "This is your own legislation. People are losing lives, because there is no facility for cashless treatment. This is for the benefit of common people. We are putting you to notice, we'll take action under contempt. Ask your secretary to come and explain."

The official was directed by the top court to appear on 28 April for the explanation.

On 8 January, the top court directed the Centre to formulate the scheme for the cashless medical treatment of motor accident victims in the "golden hour" period mandated under the law.

It had referred to Section 162(2) of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988, and ordered the government to provide by 14 March the scheme which could save numerous lives with prompt medical care to accident victims.

The golden hour, defined under Section 2(12-A) of the Act, refers to a one-hour window following a traumatic injury under which a timely medical intervention will most likely prevent death. —*PTI*

Agitators raise slogans during a protest over the Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025, in Murshidabad district of West Bengal on Tuesday **PHOTO: PTI**

Murshidabad calm post clashes over Waqf, internet still off

KOLKATA, 9 APRIL

The situation in Muslim-dominated Murshidabad district of West Bengal, which witnessed incidents of violence during protests against the Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025, was calm and peaceful on Wednesday, with no report of any untoward incident, a senior police officer said.

Prohibitory orders were clamped in and around Raghunathganj and Suti police station areas. A large number of police personnel was deployed in all sensitive areas of the district, especially in and around Jangipur town where a crowd gathered on Tuesday afternoon, demanding withdrawal of the Act, he said.

Internet connectivity remained suspended, within the areas under the Jangipur sub-division to prevent the spread of any disinformation. "The situation is calm, peaceful and under control. There is not a single untoward incident reported from anywhere in the district. Prohibitory orders remained and would continue till 6 pm of April 10 (Thursday). The suspension of internet connectivity would also remain till 6 pm of April 11 (Friday)," the officer said.

Protestors, who had gathered on the NH-12 in the Jangipur area to protest against the Waqf Bill, hurled stones at the police who were deployed in the area, on Tuesday afternoon. A couple of police vehicles were allegedly torched during the protest and police had to resort to lathi-charge and use tear gas shells to bring the situation under control. —*PTI*

Nine held in UP teen gangrape case

VARANASI, 9 APRIL

PHOTO: FREEPIK

Nine persons have so far been arrested after a 19-year-old woman was allegedly gangraped by 23 people over six days, a senior official said on Wednesday. The accused had allegedly drugged the woman and took her to several hotels.

Additional Commissioner of Police (Cantonment) Vidush Saxena confirmed the arrests. "Police teams are conducting searches to nab the other accused and they will be arrested soon," he said.

Saxena said the physical condition of the rape survivor normal and police are in contact with her family members.

The survivor's family members refused to talk to the media. "Whatever information you want, you can talk to the police," her mother said.

Officials said the woman had gone out with some youths on 29 March. When she failed to return till 4 April, her family filed a complaint.

She did not mention rape when the police rescued her. On 6 April, the survivor's family lodged a complaint alleging that she had been gangraped, police said.

A case was registered against 12 named and 11 unnamed persons.

The accused named in the complaint are Raj Vishwakarma, Sameer, Ayush, Sohail, Danish, Anmol, Sajid, Zahir, Imran, Jaib, Aman and Raj Khan.

The woman told the police that between 29 March and 4 April, the accused allegedly took her to many hotels and gang-raped her, the officer said. —*PTI*

Centre grants ₹1,600cr for micro-irrigation

NEW DELHI, 9 APRIL

The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved the Modernisation of Command Area Development and Water Management as a sub-scheme of the Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana for the 2025–26 period, with an initial outlay of Rs 1,600 crore.

The scheme aims at the modernisation of the irrigation water-supply network to supply irrigation water from the existing canals or other sources in a designated cluster.

It will make robust back-end infrastructure for micro-irrigation by farmers from an established source to the farms' gates, up to 1 hectare, with underground pressurised piped irrigation, a statement said. It said the projects will be made sustainable by Irrigation Management Transfer to the Water User Society for the management of irrigation assets.

The water-user societies will be given support for linking them with existing economic entities like FPO or PACS for five years. Youths will also be attracted to farming using the modern method of irrigation, the statement said. —*PTI*

5TH TIME SINCE 2024

Rape convict Dera chief out on 21-day furlough

CHANDIGARH, 9 APRIL

File photo of Gurmeet Ram Rahim at a premier of his film 'Jattu Engineer' in Delhi. **PHOTO: PTI**

Jailed Dera Sacha Sauda chief and rape convict Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh has been granted a 21-day furlough. This is the fifth time since January 2024 that he has been temporarily released from prison.

Singh is serving a 20-year sentence given in 2017 for raping two of his disciples.

Singh walked out of the Sunaria jail in Haryana's Rohtak on Wednesday morning. He went to the headquarters of his Dera in Haryana's Sirsa and will stay there during the period, Dera spokesperson and advocate Jitender Khurana said.

In a video clip, Singh could be heard congratulating his followers ahead of the Dera's foundation day.

Dera Sacha Sauda was founded on 29 April, 1948, by Baba Shah Mastana.

In the past, some of Singh's paroles and furloughs have coincided with polls in Haryana and neighbouring states.

In January, Singh was granted a 30-day parole, which came ahead of the 5 February Delhi Assembly polls. He was granted a 20-day parole from 1 October last year, ahead of the 5 October Haryana Assembly polls. In August, 2024, Singh was granted a 21-day furlough, which followed a three-week furlough from 7 February, 2022, barely two weeks before the Punjab Assembly polls.

Sikh organisations, such as the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, have criticised the grant of relief to Singh. —*PTI*

No action against anyone for re-sharing Kamra video: HC

MUMBAI, 9 APRIL

Kunal Kamra. **PHOTO: PTI**

The Bombay High Court on Wednesday said the Maharashtra government has not taken vindictive action against any person for re-sharing or re-uploading stand-up comic, Kunal Kamra's video in which he indirectly passed a "traitor" jibe at Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde.

A bench of Chief Justice Alok Aradhe and Justice MS Karnik made the observation while refusing to entertain a public interest litigation (PIL) filed by law student, Harshwardhan Khandekar, questioning the government's action against Kamra and the Mumbai hotel where the controversial comedy show was shot.

Kamra has filed a petition in the HC seeking to quash the FIR lodged against him over his critical comments against Shinde. He also received interim protection from arrest from the Madras HC

The PIL contended filing FIRs against a comedian for expressing his political views was violation of his fundamental rights.

Although 12 Shiv Sena workers had been for vandalising the studio, they were later granted bail.

During the show, Kamra had taunted Shinde, without taking his name, using a modified version of a popular Hindi song from the 1997 film 'Dil To Pagal Hai' where he called him a "gaddar" (traitor).

His petition seeking to quash the FIR is due for hearing on 16 April. —*PTI*

PHOTO: X

Wife, stepdaughter found dead; Agra man on the run

AGRA, 9 APRIL

The decomposed bodies of a 40-year-old woman and her nine-year-old daughter were found wrapped in a blanket inside a locked house at Jagdishpura in Agra on Tuesday night, police said on Wednesday. The remains, recovered are believed to be around four to five days old.

According to officials, neighbours alerted authorities after noticing a foul smell coming from the property. Police arrived on scene, forced entry, and found the bodies of the woman, Shabina, and her daughter Inaya inside one of the rooms.

Assistant Commissioner of Police (Lohamandi) Mayank Tiwari said Shabina was married to one Rashid, who is currently absconding. "Rashid is suspected of killing his wife and step-daughter. He had married Shabina as his second wife," ACP Tiwari said. A search operation is underway, and the motive remains unknown. —*PTI*

UP mob lynches man over murder

HARDOI, 9 APRIL

A 48-year-old man was lynched in broad daylight in Uttar Pradesh's Hardoi district, reportedly by a mob seeking revenge for a murder committed in 2009, police said on Wednesday.

Sarpanch Mahavat was lynched in Bhaingaon village that is under the jurisdiction of Beniganj police on Monday. More than 35 people, including women, attacked him with sticks. Mahavat was previously convicted for the murder of a man named Rampal and served 13-years in prison. Since his release, he was working as a street vendor.

According to Superintendent of Police Neeraj Kumar Jadaun, 18 people have been arrested so far based on CCTV footage and eyewitness accounts. A case has been registered under several sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita.

The FIR names 12 persons, while a further 25 to 30 remain unidentified. Six more suspects were identified during the investigation and have also been taken into custody.

A strong police presence has been ensured in the area to prevent further unrest. Villagers claimed the attackers showed no fear and acted in front of police personnel. The post-mortem confirmed the cause of death as injuries from blunt objects. —*PTI*

IED injures BSF man at Pakistan border

NEW DELHI/AMRITSAR, 9 APRIL

PHOTO: ANI

A Border Security Force (BSF) jawan was "seriously" injured in an improvised explosive device (IED) blast that occurred near the fence along the India-Pakistan international border in Punjab on Wednesday. It is the first such instance at this front of usage of this dangerous concoction of explosives and shrapnel used to kill and maim.

The incident took place on Tuesday night near Dorangla village in Gurdaspur district. The BSF has issued an "alert" all along the 553 km of this front in Punjab and ordered suspension of farming around the blast area.

The BSF will take up the matter and issue a strong protest note to Pakistan Rangers once a "technical and forensic" investigation concludes, sources said.

The force said in a statement that a BSF party was undertaking an "area domination" patrol ahead of the fence during the night and it detected "multiple" IEDs with concealed wires "well inside" the Indian territory.

This patrol party aimed to dominate the area and ensure the safety of troops, defence personnel, and local farmers who frequently traverse and ply on the route during the daytime. —*PTI*

PAK HAND MAY BE EXPOSED

India to get 26/11 Pak terrorist Rana 'soon'

NEW DELHI, 9 APRIL

Mumbai terror attack accused Tahawwur Rana, who is expected to be extradited to India from the US soon, would help probe agencies expose Pakistan's role behind the dastardly act that claimed 166 lives, sources said on Wednesday.

Rana has exhausted all legal options available to such subjects in the US and would be brought back to India soon, they said, adding that a multi-agency team is in the US to bring the Pakistani-origin Canadian to India.

The development comes days after Rana's last-ditch effort to stop his extradition failed when the US Supreme Court denied his application, moving him closer to being handed over to the Indian authorities to face the law in the country.

Tahawwur Rana (inset) is known to be associated with Pakistani-American terrorist David Coleman Headley, one of the main conspirators of the 26/11 attacks in Mumbai **PHOTO: X**

Rana was lodged at a jail in Los Angeles. He is known to be associated with Pakistani-American terrorist David Coleman Headley, one of the main conspirators of the 26/11 attacks.

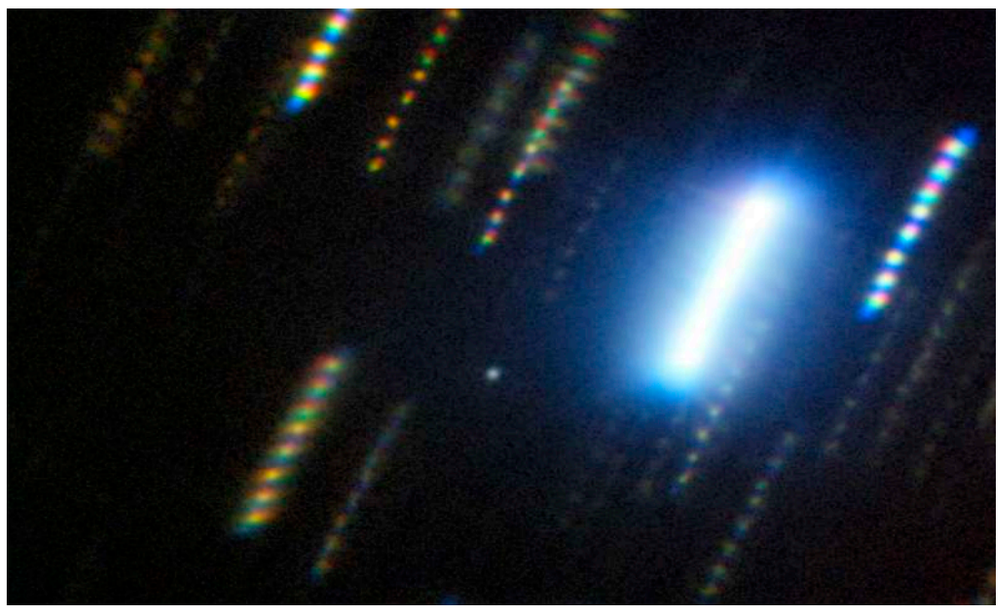
All paperwork and other legalities are being completed, the sources said, adding that there is a "very high possibility" that Rana "could be extradited shortly."

During a joint press conference with Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the White House in February, US President Donald Trump announced that his administration has approved the extradition of "very evil people of the world" Rana "to face justice in India".

Once extradited, Rana may be kept in the NIA's custody initially. The extradition could provide important leads into his travels in parts of northern and southern India days before the carnage in 2008, the sources said. —*PTI*

THE CITY KILLER

Astronomers have discovered that asteroid 2024 YR4, once thought to have a small chance of striking Earth, is shaped like a spinning hockey puck, not a typical potato-shaped rock. Observed using the Gemini South Observatory in Chile, the 200-ft asteroid rotates every 20 minutes. While the chance of it hitting Earth is now negligible, there is a 3.8 per cent chance it could strike the moon. NASA assures no impact on the moon's orbit. The asteroid's next swing by Earth will occur in four years
PHOTO: PTI



Trade war begins as Trump's tariffs come to life

President Donald Trump has launched tariff wars with nearly all of America's trading partners. And there's no end in sight.

A number of sweeping new taxes on goods from other countries are already here — and more took effect on Wednesday. Trump has promised higher rates for his latest and most severe volley of duties, which he calls "reciprocal" tariffs. With so many back-and-forth tariff actions and threats, it can be tough to keep track of where things stand. Here's a rundown of what you need to know.

Trump announced his latest — and most sweeping — round of tariffs on 2 April, which he dubbed "Liberation Day," as part of his "reciprocal" trade plan. In a fiery speech claiming that other countries had "ripped off" the US for years, Trump declared that the US would now tax nearly all of America's trading partners at a minimum of 10 per cent — and impose steeper rates for countries that he says run trade surpluses with the US. The 10 per cent baseline already went into effect Saturday. And when the clock struck at midnight, the higher import tax rates on dozens of countries and territories took hold.

The steeper levies run as high as 50 per cent — with that biggest rate landing on small economies that trade little with the US, including the African kingdom of Lesotho. Some other rates include a tax of 47 per cent on imports from Madagascar, 46 per cent on Vietnam, 32 per cent on Taiwan, 25 per cent on South Korea, 24 per cent on Japan and 20 per cent on the European Union.

Economists warn that the levies will raise prices for goods consumers buy each day — particularly as these new tariffs build on some of previous trade measures.

Trump last week announced a tariff of 34 per cent on China, for example, which would come on top of 20 per cent levies he imposed on the country earlier this year.

US President Donal Trump has promised higher rates for his latest and most severe volley of duties ***PHOTO: PTI***

Trump then added on another 50 per cent levy on Chinese goods in response to Beijing's recently-promised retaliation. That took the combined total to 104 per cent against China. White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt said at a Tuesday briefing that Trump had not been considering an extension or delay for coming rate increases.

As part of a flurry of countermeasures, China has said it will levy its own 34 per cent tariff on all US goods — matching Trump's rate — starting Thursday. Trump was quick to criticise China's move — but China has maintained that it will "fight to the end" and take countermeasures against the US to protect itself.

On Tuesday, China's Commerce Ministry called Trump's threat to escalate tariffs "a mistake on top of a mistake" that "once again exposes the blackmailing nature of the US" The trade war between the US and China isn't new. The two countries had exchanged a series of tit-for-tat levies in recent months — on top of tariffs imposed during Trump's first term, many of which were preserved or added to under former President Joe Biden.

While China has taken the toughest approach so far, several countries signalled that they are evaluating their own responses to Trump's levies. It's possible that we'll see more retaliation in the future, but some have signalled hopes to negotiate.

The head of the European Union's executive commission is among those offering a mutual reduction of tariffs — while warning that counter measures are still an option. Trump could also roll out more product-specific tariffs down the road.

The president has previously threatened import taxes on goods like copper, lumber and pharmaceutical drugs — all of which are currently exempt from Trump's "reciprocal" levies.

During a speech Tuesday night, Trump boasted he was offering "breaking news" before vowing, "We're going to be announcing, very shortly, a major tariff on pharmaceuticals."

In the same remarks, the president lamented that the US no longer produces many of the pharmaceuticals its citizens take, and said new tariffs would change that — bringing production of medication back to the US

A handful of tariffs are already in effect, including Trump's 10 per cent baseline tax which took effect on Saturday. Prior to that sweeping levy, Trump had rolled out several other rounds of tariffs targeting particular countries and products.

His 25 per cent tariffs on auto imports began last Thursday, with taxes on fully-imported cars. Those levies are set to expand to applicable auto parts in coming weeks, through 3 May. *—PTI*

SALAR

7 common habits that could be harming your kidneys

In the UK, more than 10 per cent of the population is estimated to have some stage of chronic kidney disease and more than 6,00,000 people develop some form of acute kidney injury – when the kidneys suddenly stop working properly but can recover – each year.

The kidneys play a vital role in maintaining overall health by filtering waste, excess fluids and electrolytes, such as sodium and potassium, from the blood. They also help regulate blood pressure, red blood cell production and calcium balance in the body. When the kidneys are damaged, their ability to filter waste and maintain balance is compromised, leading to a buildup of toxins, fluid retention and an imbalance in electrolytes.

This can cause a range of health problems, from high blood pressure to heart disease and weakened bones. Kidney damage can progress to chronic kidney disease and kidney failure over time. Kidney damage, then, can affect almost part of your body – but there are simple lifestyle changes you can make today to avoid harming your kidneys tomorrow. *—PTI*

Here are the habits to avoid for healthier kidneys

Using painkillers
Common over-the-counter anti-inflammatory painkillers like ibuprofen and aspirin can damage the kidney tubules – tiny tubes in the kidneys that return filtered nutrients and fluids back to the blood. The remaining fluid and waste in the renal tubules become urine – and inflammation and reduced blood flow through the kidneys. This is more likely to occur in older people or those with other medical conditions. People who already have chronic kidney disease should avoid these painkillers unless they've been prescribed by a doctor who can monitor kidney function.

Not drinking enough water
Water is needed for the kidneys to remove waste. People who don't drink enough water may be risking kidney damage, especially in hot weather. Concentrated urine from dehydration has higher levels of minerals and other waste products, this increases risk of kidney stones and urine infections, which may damage the kidneys. Some people with health conditions such as liver disease or heart failure may be on restricted fluids.

Drinking too much alcohol
Kidneys regulate the water in the body. Alcohol can dehydrate the body, which therefore changes how kidneys work. Too much alcohol can also raise blood pressure, which damages the kidneys. Most people know that alcohol can contribute to liver disease, but this in turn can harm the kidneys as it means they have to work harder.

Smoking
Most people know that smoking can contribute to cancers and heart disease. But smoking can directly harm kidneys through multiple mechanisms. Cigarette smoke contains toxic chemicals such as cadmium which may harm the kidneys. Smoking promotes oxidative stress (when harmful molecules called free radicals damage cells in the body) and can narrow the blood vessels and damage blood vessel lining which can cause kidney injury.

Being overweight
A healthy body mass index is between 18.5 and 24.9. Anything over this is classed as overweight or obese. However, this isn't the only measure of being overweight and is sometimes inaccurate. The waist circumference is a good measure of fat around the middle which is shown to increase risk of heart disease and diabetes, two common causes of kidney disease. Obesity might harm kidneys directly by disrupting fat tissue chemicals.

Making less healthy food choices
Ultra-processed foods (UPFs) are manufactured foods that contain ingredients such as fats, sugars, salts, and additives including artificial colours, flavourings and preservatives to make them taste better and increase their shelf life. Examples of UPFs include meats such as sausages, carbonated soft drinks and packaged breads. Diets high in salt (sodium) can also be problematic, especially in people who already have kidney disease. The kidneys filter excess water from the blood, needing a balance of sodium and potassium.

Poor sleep
There is some evidence that links sleep quality and duration with kidney disease. A study has shown that poor sleep increases the risk of chronic kidney disease. Research differs slightly but having less than six hours or more than ten hours of sleep daily may harm your kidneys. Optimal sleep tends to be between seven to nine hours per night for most people.

Factors such as age and family history are beyond your control but many habits can be changed to help manage kidney health.
—PTI

Kidneys play a vital role in maintaining overall health by filtering waste, excess fluids and electrolytes ***PHOTO: PTI***

LETTERS

write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

CR Park fish vendors face threat of shutdown amid BJP's anti-meat drive

Fish sellers of Chittranjan Park found themselves in a state of disbelief last week when the anti-meat overdrive of the Hindu right hit the local markets with a warning to shut shops because they were close to a temple.

Incredulous, some of the shopkeepers claimed they were the ones who built the temple in the first place.

A video that captured a member of the saffron brigade making a case before the shopkeepers for the shutdown, citing the temple's closeness, made rounds on social media, attracting at least one lawmaker's attention.

TMC MP Mahua Moitra posted a series of statements on X, accusing BJP workers of threatening Bengali fish vendors.

In one of her posts, Moitra shared a video, with the text: "Please watch as saffron brigade BJP goons threaten fish-eating Bengalis of Chittaranjan Park, Delhi. Never in 60 years has this happened, residents say."

She too claimed that the temple in question was built by the market people. In another post, she shared a WhatsApp message, allegedly from a local, who described the situation as "terrible" due to the "forced closure" of meat and fish shops.

Divendu, a fish vendor, said that some people came to his shop and asked him to close his shop, as they recorded the incident on camera.

"We told them the land was approved by the DDA for us to set up our shops. No one has ever asked us to shut down before," he said. "We are Bengali Sanatanis. We also pray before opening our shops each day – this is our tradition."

Mithoon Das, another shopkeeper, said he has been selling fish in the area for 25 years and what happened that day was unprecedented.

"Around four or five days ago, a few people came and told us that we had to shut down our shops because we cannot sell fish near a temple," Das said.

Ashok Bose, the vice-chairman of the EPDP, an apex body of the Bengali community in CR Park, said the group became aware of the issue through social media.

He said the fish market association has submitted a complaint to the EPDP, and its secretary, Ashok Bhattacharjee, would file a police complaint today.

"The fish market was here even before the temple was built. In fact, shopkeepers pooled money to build the temple," Bose said.

CR Park found themselves in a state of disbelief last week when the anti-meat overdrive of the right hit the local markets ***PHOTO: PTI***

He argued that across India, temples are commonly located near markets or even within police stations so people can offer prayers before starting their day.

"No one has had any issue with the temple being next to a fish market until now," he added.

Sanjeev Bhattacharya, a priest at the Kali Temple near the market, said fish has a venerated place in Bengali traditions.

- A video that captured a member of the saffron brigade making a case before the shopkeepers for the shutdown, citing the temple's closeness, made rounds on social media, attracting at least one lawmaker's attention.
- Another shopkeeper, said he has been selling fish in the area for 25 years and what happened that day was unprecedented.
- Across India, temples are commonly located near markets or even within police stations so people can offer prayers before starting their day.

"We offer fish to the goddess during Durga Puja and serve it at weddings. Every culture has its practices, and no one should oppose that," he said.

"Those who eat fish don't have a problem with the market, but those who don't, often do. There are also wine shops and hookah parlours near the temple, but no one objects to those," he added.

An authorised source said no complaint has been made yet with the police. "The market is a licensed one according to MCD records. The video appears to be outdated, but we are verifying the date of the incident. No police complaint has been received so far," said the person.

Delhi BJP President Virendra Sachdeva said everyone must respect the sanctity of temples and added that fish market traders in CR Park have always done so.

"Fish markets have been legally allotted and are essential in this area. Traders maintain high cleanliness standards and actively participate in CR Park's socio-religious events," he said.

Videos from places across Delhi have surfaced on social media showing local BJP MLAs or other leaders asking meat sellers to shut their shops citing one pretext or the other.

Last month, Delhi minister Parvesh Verma informed the Assembly that orders had been issued to remove illegal meat and fish-selling units in the capital. *—PTI*

WORLD LEADERS KISSING MY A**: TRUMP

Jinping eyes stronger ties with neighbours to enhance supply chain as tariff war rages

WASHINGTON DC, 9 APRIL

As tariffs came into effect, US President Donald Trump seemed to enjoy its full impact as he mocked world leaders reaching out to US to make a deal saying "they are calling us up, kissing my a**", at the National Republican Congressional Committee on Tuesday. In comments meant to bolster his support among his voter base amidst Republicans expressing concern over the effect of tariffs, Trump doubled down saying countries were dying to make a deal.

China, meanwhile has raised tariffs to 84 per cent on goods coming from the US in an additional countermeasure. Last week, China said it would levy 34 per cent tariffs on all US goods. On Wednesday, Trump's tariffs of 104 per cent went into effect on Chinese exports to the US.

At the fundraising gala for House Republicans, Trump said, "I'm telling you- these countries are calling us up, kissing my a**. They are dying to make a deal- 'please sir make a deal, I'll do anything, I'll do anything sir'".

I'm telling you – these countries are calling us up... They are dying to make a deal – 'please sir make a deal, I'll do anything, I'll do anything sir...'
–Donald Trump

Deriding some Republicans for expressing opposition to the tariffs, Trump said, "I'll see some rebel Republicans that want to grandstand say, I think that Congress should take over negotiations.' Let me tell you, you don't negotiate like I negotiate," he said.

Trump also announced plans to impose significant tariffs on the pharmaceutical sector, aiming to encourage companies to establish manufacturing facilities in the US.

"Very shortly, will announce a major tariff on pharma, and when these companies hear that, they will leave China and other countries because most of their products are sold here. And, they will be opening their plants here," Trump said.

Earlier, Chinese President Xi Jinping on Wednesday pledged to strengthen the strategic relationships with neighbouring countries by "appropriately" managing differences and enhancing supply chain ties as China's tariff war with the US escalated.

In his first public speech after US President Donald Trump's steep global hike of tariffs, especially targeting China with 104 per cent on Chinese exports to America, Xi called for building a community with a shared future with neighbouring countries and striving to open new ground for China's neighbourhood work, state media reported. *—ANI*

China is threat to Panama canal: Hegseth

Washington DC, 9 April

US Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth said Tuesday the Panama Canal faces ongoing threats from China but that together the United States and Panama will keep it secure. Hegseth's remarks triggered a fiery response from the Chinese government, which said: "Who represents the real threat to the Canal? People will make their own judgement." Hegseth had said, "China-based companies continue to control critical infrastructure in the canal area. That gives China the potential to conduct surveillance activities across Panama." *—PTI*

Cornell, Northwestern univs lose funding

More than $1B in federal funding for Cornell University and around $790 million for Northwestern University have been frozen while the government investigates alleged civil rights violations at both schools, the White House says. Previously cutting off money to schools, including Columbia University and the University of Pennsylvania to get them to comply with Trump's political agenda on Gaza and diversity, left them struggling to navigate cuts to grants for research institutions. The White House confirmed the funding pauses late Tuesday night, but offered no further details on what it entails, or the grants to the affected schools. *—PTI*

Senate clears Colby's appointment

Washington, 9 April

The Senate on Tuesday confirmed the appointment of Elbridge Colby as the top policy adviser at the Pentagon, ignoring his downplaying threats from Russia and its president Vladimir Putin. Colby initially declined several times to answer direct questions on whether Russia invaded Ukraine, calling it a sensitive topic, but later gave in and said the country is a military threat to the US and Europe. *—PTI*

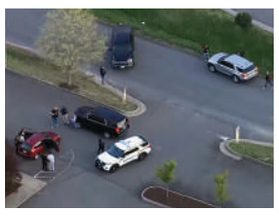


PHOTO: X

Virginia townhouse shooting leaves 3 dead, 3 injured

SPOTSYLVANIA COUNTY, 9 APRIL

Three people were killed and three others injured in a shooting on Tuesday evening in northeastern Virginia, with authorities confirming that one or more suspects remain at large. Emergency calls were made around 5.30pm reporting gunfire at a townhouse complex in Spotsylvania County, near Fredericksburg and roughly 65 miles southwest of Washington, D.C., according to Major Elizabeth Scott of the Spotsylvania Sheriff's Office. All victims were found outdoors. The wounded were taken to hospital with gunshot injuries, though their conditions are not yet known. Residents were urged to stay indoors while a large police presence searched the area. *—PTI*

Indonesia offers temporary shelter to Palestinians

JAKARTA, 9 APRIL

Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto announced on Wednesday that Indonesia will offer temporary shelter to Palestinians wounded or orphaned by the ongoing conflict in Gaza. Speaking ahead of a diplomatic tour of the Middle East, Subianto said his country is prepared to evacuate up to 1,000 individuals in the first phase, including those injured or traumatised, as well as orphaned children. "We are ready to send planes and bring them to Indonesia, where they can recover until it is safe to return," he stated, adding that the move is not intended for permanent resettlement. He has instructed the foreign minister to begin coordination with Palestinian authorities immediately. *—PTI*

UN official praises India's Myanmar quake relief

MANDALAY, 9 APRIL

India has been hailed as a key humanitarian actor in the wake of Myanmar's devastating 7.7-magnitude earthquake on 28 March. Sajjad Mohammad Sajid, Head of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in Myanmar, commended India's rapid response under 'Operation Brahma', which delivered over 1,000 metric tonnes of aid, including food, medicines, and a field hospital. A 200-member Indian rescue and medical team was also deployed to support hardest-hit areas, especially Mandalay, where local hospitals remain severely damaged. Sajid noted the field hospital's crucial role in providing trauma care. The earthquake has claimed over 3,500 lives. *—PTI*

Former Lankan minister held for abduction

COLOMBO, 9 APRIL

A former Sri Lankan state minister has been arrested in connection with a historic abduction case, becoming the latest ex-MP to be taken into custody amid the government's renewed crackdown on past misconduct. S Chandrakanthan, a former Chief Minister of the Eastern Province and later a state minister in the central government, was detained last night in Batticaloa, police confirmed. The arrest relates to an investigation into a past kidnapping. Chandrakanthan, once a militant with the LTTE before transitioning into politics, has previously faced allegations of leading a paramilitary group in the island's east. His detention adds to a growing list of former parliamentarians under legal scrutiny. At least three others are currently in remand custody for alleged misappropriation of public assets. . *—PTI*

Suspected US strikes in Yemen kill 8 people

DUBAI, 9 APRIL

Suspected US airstrikes have pounded the area around Yemen's Red Sea port city of Hodeida, killing at least eight people, the Iran-backed Houthi rebels said.

The strikes hit around Hodeida's al-Hawak district, wounding 16. The area is home to the city's airport, which the rebels have used to target shipping in the Red Sea.

Since its start, the intense campaign of US airstrikes targeting the rebels over their attacks on shipping in Mideast waters has killed at least 81 people.

Footage aired by the rebels' al-Masirah satellite news channel showed chaotic scenes of people carrying wounded to waiting ambulances and rescuers searching by the light of their mobile phones. The target appeared to be a home in a residential neighbourhood, likely part of a wider decapitation campaign launched by the Trump administration to kill rebel leaders. Other strikes targeted Yemen's mountainous Amran governorate, north of theebel-held capital of Sanaa.

A Yemeni inspects the damage reportedly caused by US airstrikes in Sanaa Monday **PHOTO: PTI**

Strikes later apparently targeted Jebel Nuqum, near Sanaa. Others hit Dhamar and Ibb governorates, wounding three.

The US military's Central Command, which oversees American military operations, did not immediately acknowledge the strikes.

The White House has said more than 200 strikes have been conducted so far.

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, speaking in the Oval Office on Monday during a visit by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, warned that America was "not going to relent" in its campaign targeting the Houthis.

The Houthis targeted more than 100 merchant vessels with missiles and drones, sinking two of them and killing four sailors from November 2023 until January of this year. They also launched attacks targeting American warships without success. *—PTI*

During the discussions, Trump appeared to slap down, contradict or complicate each of Netanyahu's policy prerogatives **PHOTO: PTI**

Netanyahu–Trump meet reveals gaps

TEL AVIV, 9 APRIL

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu visited Washington for a hastily organised meeting to discuss key issues like Iran's nuclear program, US tariffs, surging influence of Turkey in Syria and the Gaza war.

Netanyahu appeared to leave the meeting largely empty-handed. During the discussions, Trump appeared to slap down, contradict or complicate each of Netanyahu's policy prerogatives. However, Netanyahu declared the meeting a success.

Israel restarted the war in Gaza last month, ending a Trump-endorsed ceasefire, as tensions with Iran continue to escalate over its nuclear program.

After returning to power, Trump nominated pro-Israel figures for key administration positions and abandoned the Biden administration's criticism of Israel's conduct in Gaza and the West Bank and of Netanyahu's steps to weaken Israeli courts.

Trump has suggested that the U.S. could take military action if Iran doesn't agree to negotiate. But his announcement that talks would take place between the US and Iran this weekend flew in the face of Netanyahu's hawkish views.

Netanyahu favoured a diplomatic agreement similar to Libya's deal in 2003 to destroy Iran's nuclear facilities and allow inspectors unfettered access. However, it remains unclear if Trump will support it.

Although Israel had announced eliminating all levies on US goods, it didn't deter US from slapping a 17% tariff on all Israeli goods.

On whether he would change his stand concerning the tariffs on Israel, Trump cited the billions of dollars the US gives the country in military assistance each year, which is the bedrock of the US-Israel relationship and an insurance policy for US interests in the region. *—PTI*

12 dead in 'staged encounters' in Balochistan

BALOCHISTAN, 9 APRIL

A sharp rise in alleged extrajudicial killings of forcibly disappeared individuals in Balochistan has sparked widespread concern, with at least 12 deaths reported over the past two days, according to The Balochistan Post.

Incidents were reported in Barkhan, Khuzdar, Mashkay, and Buleda, where security forces are accused of "killing" previously missing persons in what families and human rights groups are calling "staged encounters".

In Barkhan's Mehma Samand Khan area, three bullet-riddled bodies – identified as Haq Nawaz Buzdar, Shero Buzdar, and Gul Zaman Buzdar, were found on Monday. Haq Nawaz was reportedly taken from his home on 5 April, while Shero had been missing for nine months.

Authorities maintain the deceased were linked to armed groups, but families reject this, accusing the state of carrying out unlawful killings.

Human rights groups continue to demand independent investigations, but accountability remains elusive. *—ANI*

North Korea's nuclear status won't change, says Kim Jong Un's sister

SEOUL, 9 APRIL

The powerful sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un on Wednesday mocked Washington and its Asian allies for what she called their "daydream" of denuclearising the North, insisting that the country will never give up its nuclear weapons programme.

The statement by Kim Yo Jong, one of the country's top foreign policy officials, was in response to a meeting last week between the top diplomats of the United States, South Korea and Japan where they reaffirmed their commitment to push for the North's denuclearisation.

Kim Yo Jong **PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA**

"If the US and its vassal forces continue to insist on anachronistic denuclearisation', it will only give unlimited justness and justification to the advance of the DPRK aspiring after the building of the strongest nuclear force for self-defense," she said in comments released by state media, using the initials of North Korea's formal name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. She said North Korea's nuclear weapons status can "never be reversed by any physical strength or sly artifice."

Tensions in the regions have increased as Kim Jong Un continues to flaunt his military nuclear capabilities and align with Russia. *—PTI*

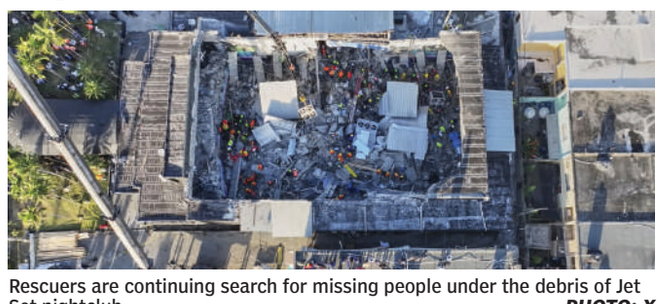
Roof collapse at Dominican Republic nightclub claims 98 lives

SANTO DOMINGO, 9 APRIL

The roof of an iconic nightclub in the Dominican capital collapsed early Tuesday during a merengue concert attended by politicians, athletes and others, leaving at least 98 people dead and 160 injured, authorities said. Crews were searching for potential survivors in the rubble at the one-story Jet Set nightclub in Santo Domingo, said Juan Manuel Mendez, director of the Center of Emergency Operations.

Nearly 12 hours after the top of the nightclub collapsed onto patrons, rescue crews were still pulling out survivors from under the debris, shushing those around them so they could listen for faint cries for help. Firefighters removed blocks of broken concrete and used sawed pieces of wood as planks to lift heavy debris as the noise of drills breaking through concrete filled the air.

Nelsy Cruz, the governor of the northwestern Montecristi province and sister of Major League Baseball All-Star Nelson Cruz, was among the victims. Rescue crews were still looking for singer Rubby Pérez until late Tuesday night. Those still looking for their family and friends gathered around a man playing a guitar outside the club as they sang hymns. *—PTI*



Rescuers are continuing search for missing people under the debris of Jet Set nightclub **PHOTO: X**

A Palestinian youth injured in an Israeli airstrike being brought to the Baptist Hospital in Gaza City on Wednesday **PHOTO: PTI**

AIR RAID ON GAZA CITY FLAT KILLS 23

DEIR AL-BALAH, 9 APRIL

An Israeli airstrike on a residential block in the war-torn Shijaiyah neighbourhood of northern Gaza has killed at least 23 people, including eight women and eight children, according to Gaza's Health Ministry and Al-Ahly hospital.

The strike targeted a four-storey building, with surrounding structures also damaged. Rescue teams continue to search the rubble for survivors.

The Israeli military claimed the strike targeted a senior Hamas militant but did not disclose a name. Israel holds Hamas responsible for civilian casualties, accusing it of operating within densely populated areas. The attack comes amid escalating conflict following the collapse of an eight-week ceasefire. *—PTI*

HACKERS IN ACTION

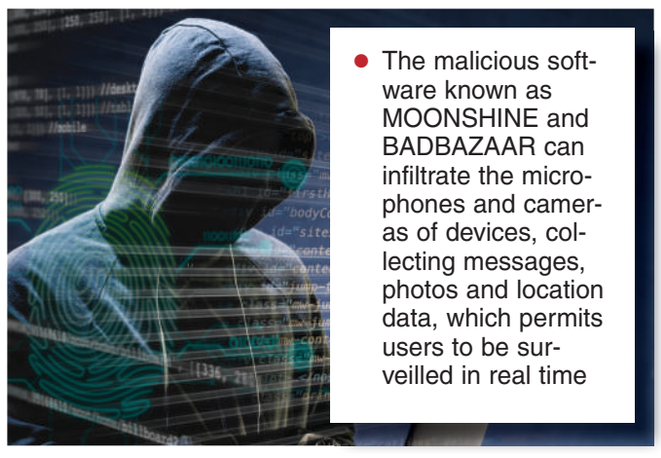
Chinese spyware snoop on neighbours

LONDON, 9 APRIL

The National Cyber Security Centre of the UK and various international organisations focused on cybersecurity and intelligence announced on Wednesday that hackers are using two types of previously recognized spyware to monitor Uyghur, Tibetan, and Taiwanese individuals as well as civil society groups, said a report from the Central Tibet Administration (CTA).

The malicious software known as MOONSHINE and BADBAZAAR can infiltrate the microphones and cameras of devices, collecting messages, photos, and location data, which permits users to be surveilled in real time without their awareness, according to the CTA report.

Spyware-infected applications are being leveraged to target individuals and groups worldwide associated with activities deemed a threat to China's stability by the state, according to a press release from the NCSC highlighted.



- The malicious software known as MOONSHINE and BADBAZAAR can infiltrate the microphones and cameras of devices, collecting messages, photos and location data, which permits users to be surveilled in real time

Those believed to be at the highest risk of being targeted include individuals connected to Taiwan's independence movement, organizations advocating for Tibetan rights, and Uyghur Muslims. Additionally, ethnic minorities from or within China's Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, democracy advocates, and members of the Falun Gong are also thought to be in danger, as noted in the CTA report.

Hackers promoted apps mimicking the other social messaging apps in local languages.

The Audio Quran app for example employs MOONSHINE spyware to surveil Uyghurs, according to the NCSC, building trust by incorporating the Uyghur language in its file name and presenting itself as containing content related to the Quran, Islam's primary religious text. *—ANI*

PHOTO: PTI

Gold slips below Rs 91,000-mark on reduced demand

NEW DELHI, 9 APRIL

Gold prices plunged Rs 1,050 to Rs 90,200 per 10 g in the national capital on Wednesday due to poor offtake by stockists and retailers, according to the All India Sarafa Association. Gold of 99.9 per cent purity had closed at Rs 91,250 per 10g in the previous market close. Gold of 99.5 per cent purity depreciated Rs 1,050 to Rs 89,750 per 10g against the Tuesday's close of Rs 90,800 per 10g.Silver prices climbed Rs 500 to Rs 93,200 per kg. Silevr had settled at Rs 92,700 per kg on Tuesday. Meanwhile, spot gold increased USD 61.98, or 2.08 per cent, to USD 3,044.14 per ounce in the overseas markets.—*PTI*

Rupee plunges by 30p to 86.56 against US dollar

MUMBAI, 9 APRIL

The rupee lost further ground on the fourth straight session, declining sharply by 30 paise to 86.56 against the US dollar in early trade on Wednesday ahead of Reserve Bank's monetary policy decisions. Forex traders said that despite a steep fall in crude oil prices and a weak American currency, the looming worldwide trade war continued to stoke fears of global economic meltdown, fuelling withdrawal of foreign funds with the stock markets remaining shell-shocked. At the inter-bank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 86.52 and hit the low of 86.60 before strengthening a tad to 86.56 against the greenback in early deals, still sharply lower by 30 paise from the previous closing level. —*PTI*

India exported 2.87LT sugar in 2024-25

NEW DELHI, 9 APRIL

India exported 2.87 lakh tonnes (LT) of sugar till 8 April of the ongoing 2024-25 marketing year with maximum shipments of 51,596 tonnes to Somalia, trade body AISTA said on Wednesday. The sugar marketing year runs from October to September. Sugar exports for the 2024-25 marketing year in India were allowed on 20 January, 2025. The total quantity permitted for export is one million tonnes. All India Sugar Trade Association (AISTA) said mills have exported a total of 2,87,204 tonnes of sugar till April 8 of the current marketing year. Of the total exports, maximum shipments were to Somalia at 51,596 tonnes, followed by the Afghanistan at 48,864 tonnes, Sri Lanka at 46,757 tonnes, and Libya at 30,729 tonnes. —*PTI*

Glenmark, Biocon units recall products in US

NEW DELHI, 9 APRIL

Drug firms Glenmark and Biocon are recalling products in the US for manufacturing issues, according to the US health regulator. In its latest Enforcement Report, the US Food and Drug Administration (USFDA) stated that a US-based unit of the Mumbai-based drug firm is recalling a medication to treat various ailments like schizophrenia and anxiety. New Jersey-based Glenmark Pharmaceuticals Inc is recalling 8,160 bottles of chlorpromazine hydrochloride tablets in the US for "CGMP deviations", USFDA stated. The company initiated the Class II nationwide (US) recall on 11 March this year. Shares of Glenmark ended 4.35 per cent down to Rs 1,376.35 apiece on the BSE on Wednesday. Biocon shares, on the other hand, ended 5.33 per cent down at Rs 305.20 apiece on the BSE —*PTI*

Amid tariffs, RBI prioritises growth over inflation

RBI hints at more rate cuts to give more money to consumers

MUMBAI, 9 APRIL

- Speaking to the media after presentation of the first bi-monthly monetary policy for the current financial year, Malhotra said, RBI has reduced the growth forecast for 2025-26 by 20 basis points to 6.5 per cent.

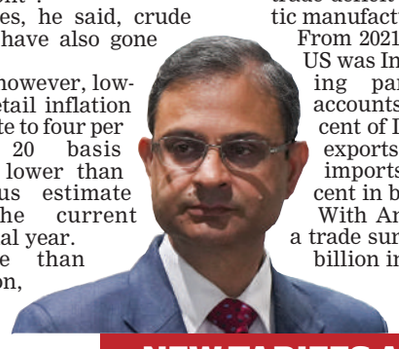
Amid the ongoing global tariff war, Reserve Bank Governor Sanjay Malhotra on Wednesday said he is more worried about its impact on growth than inflation.

Speaking to the media after presentation of the first bi-monthly monetary policy for the current financial year, Malhotra said, RBI has reduced the growth forecast for 2025-26 by 20 basis points to 6.5 per cent.

As far as the impact of US tariff on India, he said, "We have given our assessment as you can see, the growth rate, we have reduced by 20 basis points this year, primarily arising out of uncertainties."

On the inflation front, he said, "it can actually move both ways, because of the surplus, because of the demand that is going to shrink as a result of the trade tariff friction. It may help on the inflation front".

Besides, he said, crude prices have also gone down.



RBI, however, lowered retail inflation estimate to four per cent, 20 basis points lower than previous estimate for the current financial year.

"More than inflation, we are concerned about its (tariff hike) impact on growth," he said.

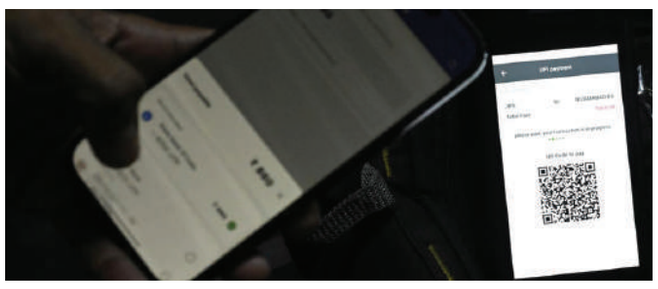
Last week, US President Donald Trump announced the imposition of reciprocal tariffs on 60 countries, including India, effective 9 April. India has attracted 26 per cent reciprocal tariff over various products, including shrimp, carpet, medical devices and gold jewellery.

The US has claimed that American goods face 52 per cent duty in the Indian market. A new tariff policy was designed to reduce the US trade deficit and boost domestic manufacturing.

From 2021-22 to 2023-24, the US was India's largest trading partner. The US accounts for about 18 per cent of India's total goods exports, 6.22 per cent in imports, and 10.73 per cent in bilateral trade.

With America, India had a trade surplus of USD 35.32 billion in goods in 2023-24. —*PTI*

RBI permits increase in UPI P2M transaction limit



NPCI revise transaction limits in UPI for P2M PHOTO: PTI

MUMBAI, 9 APRIL

The Reserve Bank on Wednesday permitted National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) to upwardly revise transaction limits in Unified Payments Interface (UPI) for person-to-merchant payments (P2M) based on evolving user needs. At present, the transaction amount for UPI, covering both Person to Person (P2P) and P2M, is capped at Rs 1 lakh except for specific use cases of P2M payments which have higher limits, some at Rs 2 lakh and others at Rs 5 lakh —*PTI*

RBI rate cut will cushion economy, say firms

NEW DELHI, 9 APRIL

The Reserve Bank's move to lower the repo rate for the second time in a row will cushion India's economy against external shocks in the face of reciprocal tariffs imposed by the US that has triggered a global turmoil, industry bodies said on Wednesday.

The RBI on Wednesday slashed the key interest rate by 25 basis points to 6 per cent, providing relief to home, auto and corporate loan borrowers.

CII Director General Chandrajit Banerjee termed the decision to continue with the rate-easing cycle as timely and prudent. "The rate cut coupled with the shift in monetary policy stance from 'neutral' to 'accommodative', too, is a big positive," Banerjee said.

COS GOING STRONG

Meanwhile, DSP Asset Managers said in a report that with stable finances, Indian companies are better positioned to handle the current economic slowdown. A closer look at the data shows that the median debt-to-assets ratio has reached record lows in several industries. This indicates that companies have more stable finances and are in a better position to handle a slowdown and bounce back when growth returns, the report said. This is a major shift from previous cycles, where many sectors were weighed down by high levels of debt, it said —*PTI/ANI*

No target for rupee-dollar exchange rate, says RBI

MUMBAI, 9 APRIL

C Reserve Bank Governor Sanjay Malhotra on Wednesday said the central bank does not target any level or band for the rupee-dollar exchange rate, but intervenes in forex market only when there is excessive volatility. Talking to reporters after the announcement of the April monetary policy, the Governor said the impact the US tariffs on India, vis-a-vis some of the other countries, including China and even the smaller nations is much less. The Governor was replying to a question about RBI's currency management strategy as China is likely to use Chinese yuan depreciation as a tool to counter US tariffs. —*PTI*

NEW TARIFFS ALARM INVESTORS

Markets decline amid equity losses

MUMBAI, 9 APRIL

Benchmark stock indices Sensex and Nifty closed lower on Wednesday in line with losses in global markets after fresh US tariffs on China, even as the Reserve Bank cut policy rates for a second consecutive time as it sought to bolster the economy in the face of further pressure from damaging US tariffs.

The 30-share BSE Sensex dropped 379.93 points or 0.51 per cent to settle at 73,847.15. During the day, it slumped 554.02 points or 0.74 per cent to a low of 73,673.06.

The NSE Nifty declined 136.70 points or 0.61 per cent to 22,399.15. Intra-day, it tanked 182.6 points or 0.81 per cent to 22,353.25.

Mirroring weak trends in Asian equities, domestic key equity indices opened lower and remained in the negative territory throughout the session after the US imposed a fresh set of tariffs, including a whopping 104 per cent levy on Chinese imports.

State Bank of India was the biggest loser among Sensex shares, dropping by 3.43 per cent amid a fall in banking shares. Tech Mahindra, Larsen & Toubro, Tata Steel, Sun Pharma, Infosys, HCL Tech, Axis Bank, Tata Consultancy Services and NTPC were also among laggards.Nestle, Hindustan Unilever, Titan, Power Grid, UltraTech Cement and ITC were among the gainers.

The BSE smallcap gauge dropped 1.08 per cent and midcap index declined 0.73 per cent. —*PTI*

Asia, Europe take a hit as US tariffs take effect

Asian and European shares slid on Wednesday, with Japan's Nikkei 225 dipping more than five per cent, as the latest set of US tariffs, including a massive 104 per cent levy on Chinese, imports took effect. The Nikkei 225 lost 3.9 per cent to 31,714.03. In Hong Kong, the Hang Seng lost 0.4 per cent to 20,041.03, while the Shanghai Composite index reversed early losses, gaining 0.9 per cent to 3,173.56. Taiwan led losses in Asia, as its Taiex plunged 5.8 per cent. China vowed "resolute measures" to defend its trading rights, but gave no details on how it will respond to US moves. —*PTI*

DIPLOMACY OVER RETALIATION

India's 'smart' approach to tariffs may secure access to market

WASHINGTON, 9 APRIL

India's decision to prioritise diplomacy over retaliation in response to the Trump administration's tariff announcements could pave the way for successful bilateral trade negotiations, said Mark Linscott, senior advisor on trade at the US-India Strategic Partnership Forum (USISPF).

In an interview with PTI Videos, Linscott, who previously served as the former assistant US trade representative, praised India's strategy as "remarkably smart", arguing it positions the country favourably for long-term economic benefits.

US President Donald Trump announced sweeping tariffs on a range of imports, including from India, sparking global market unease and fears of a potential trade war.

Despite the uproar by opposition parties, Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government refrained from imposing retaliatory tariffs, a move Linscott described as "the right one".

He warned that retaliation often escalates tensions, citing the Trump administration's history of responding to counter-tariffs with further measures, creating a "downward spiral".

"India's neutral and diplomatic response, though politically costly domestically, has laid a strong foundation for upcoming negotiations," Linscott said. The two nations have committed to negotiating a bilateral trade agreement, with an initial focus on resolving tariff disputes quickly.

Linscott expressed optimism that both sides could reach an early agreement on tariffs and non-tariff barriers, potentially leading the Trump administration to lift the new tariffs specifically targeting India.

Parallel efforts are underway to finalise a "first tranche" of the trade agreement by the end of this year.

However, Linscott cautioned that a comprehensive agreement might extend into 2026 or 2027, given the complexity of trade negotiations —*PTI*

WPI inflation likely to ease to 2.1% in March: Report

NEW DELHI, 9 APRIL

Wholesale Price Index (WPI) inflation is expected to ease to 2.1 per cent year-on-year in March 2025, down from 2.4 per cent in February, mainly due to a seasonal decline in food prices, according to a report by Union Bank of India.

The report highlighted that food prices continued to fall during March, especially in vegetable segment. Vegetable prices dropped four per cent month-on-month, though the pace of decline has slowed compared to previous months.

However, not all food items followed the same trend. Edible oil prices saw a marginal increase of 1.3 per cent month-on-month, while sugar prices rose by one per cent. These increases are expected to slightly push up prices of manufactured food products, as edible oil and sugar are major raw materials used in them.

The report also noted that the fuel WPI is expected to decline in March due to drop in global crude oil prices. This decline in energy costs has contributed to overall moderation in WPI inflation.

However, not all components are showing downward trend. —*ANI*

BharatPe gets aggregator licence from RBI

NEW DELHI, 9 APRIL

BharatPe Group firm Resilient Payments has received final authorisation from the RBI to operate as an online payment aggregator.

The authorisation will allow Resilient to facilitate various payment-related services through its own payment gateway.

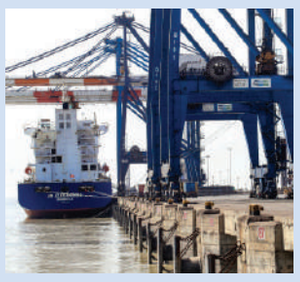
BharatPe said it is now the only fintech company in India with an NBFC licence, a stake in a Small Finance Bank, and final authorisation to operate as an online payment aggregator. —*PTI*

India ends trans-shipment for B'desh

NEW DELHI, 9 APRIL

The government has terminated the trans-shipment facility that allowed export cargo from Bangladesh to third countries using Indian land customs stations en route to ports and airports, according to a circular.

Indian exporters, mainly from the apparel sector, had earlier urged the government to withdraw this facility to the neighbouring country. The facility had enabled smooth trade flows for Bangladesh's exports to countries like Bhutan, Nepal, and Myanmar.



The announcement came at a time when the US has imposed sweeping tariffs against a number of countries, including India and Bangladesh. The earlier circular had allowed transshipment of export cargo from Bangladesh to third countries using Indian Land Customs Stations en route to Indian ports and airports.

According to trade experts, the decision will help many of the Indian exporting sectors like apparel, footwear, and gems and jewellery. Bangladesh is a big competitor of India in the textile sector.

"Now we will have more air capacity for our cargo. In the past, exporters have complained about lesser space due to the transhipment facility given to Bangladesh," Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) Director General Ajay Sahai said. . —*PTI*

LPG PRICE UP BY RS 50

Oil companies likely to reduce loss on LPG sales

NEW DELHI, 9 APRIL

Oil marketing companies (OMCs) are likely to reduce losses on selling domestic LPG cylinders over the next few months due to the recent LPG price hike and falling international fuel prices, according to a report by Antique Stock Broking.

The government has increased the prices of LPG cylinders by Rs 50 from April. It has also raised excise duty on petrol and diesel by Rs 2 per litre.

According to the report, the LPG price hike is clearly aimed at covering the under-recoveries, or losses which OMCs are facing while selling LPG cylinders below the cost. These under-recoveries were becoming a financial burden.

Oil marketing companies are likely to reduce losses on selling domestic LPG cylinders over the next few months PHOTO: PTI

It said, "With the latest hike, LPG losses will fall to INR 160/cyl in May-25, which we estimate will decline to INR 60/cyl by 2QFY26".

The report estimated that losses on LPG will fall to Rs 160 per cylinder in May 2025, and further reduce to just Rs 60 per cylinder by the second quarter of the financial year 2025-26.

These lower losses are expected because of a fall in crude oil prices and a seasonal drop in international propane prices, especially from Saudi Arabia. Propane prices are likely to fall by USD 85 per tonne, reaching around USD 525 per tonne by August.

By August, LPG under-recoveries could fall further to Rs 60 per cylinder and may even come down to zero if these trends continue. —*ANI*

FMCG sector is set for a gradual recovery: Report

NEW DELHI, 9 APRIL

The Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) sector is better positioned to deal with the current market uncertainties, says a report by Phillip Capital

Despite slow growth in recent years, the report stated that the sector may see improvement in the coming quarters. The report mentioned that the outlook for FY26 is more positive.

Several factors may support a recovery in the sector. First, impact of high inflation, slow urban demand, and costly raw materials is beginning to ease. Second, rural demand is expected to improve, supported by another good monsoon. Third, tax benefits announced in the recent Union Budget are likely to boost consumption.

In the past month, FMCG index has risen 2.6 per cent, while the broader Nifty50 has declined by 1.7 per cent. This recent outperformance shows that FMCG stocks may offer some safety during uncertain market conditions.

The report expects only slow recovery in FMCG volumes and profit margins.

Because of this, it has cut earnings per share estimates for FY26 and FY27 by up to 4.5 per cent. —*ANI*

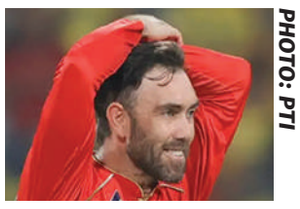


PHOTO: PTI

Maxwell fined 25% of match fee for IPL code breach

MULLANPUR, 9 APRIL

Punjab Kings' all-rounder Glenn Maxwell has been fined 25 per cent of his match fee and handed one demerit point for breaching IPL Code of Conduct during the match against Chennai Super Kings here. The 36-year-old Maxwell has admitted to the Level 1 offence under article 2.2, which relates to abuse of fixtures and fittings during the match, which was played here at the New PCA Stadium on Tuesday.—*PTI*

PHOTO: X

Scheffler is back to defend his Masters title

AUGUSTA, 9 APRIL

The prerogative of choosing the menu for the Champions Dinner at the Masters falls upon the defending champion, and Scottie Scheffler made an addition in his second go-around at those selections that underscored his wry sense of humor. His dad used to make wonderful meatballs. It was young Scottie's favorite dish growing up. And you can't very well have meatballs without some sort of pasta. So, the two-time Masters champion quite naturally thought: "ravioli." The same thing he was making in December, when the world's No. 1 player shredded his hand on a shard of glass. Come to think of it, maybe instead of just serving the ravioli Tuesday night, when the former Masters champions all gathered to celebrate Scheffler and reminisce with one another, he ought to have had some ravioli-making stations. —*PTI*

Andreatta to be head coach of Scotland's team

EDINBURGH, 9 APRIL

Melissa Andreatta has left her role as assistant manager of Australia's women's national team to take over as head coach of Scotland Women. The Scottish Football Association announced the hiring of Andreatta on Wednesday, saying she is expected to take over in time for Scotland's Nations League match late May against Austria, subject to securing a visa.A former head coach of Brisbane Roar's women's team, Andreatta has been with Football Australia since 2016, firstly in its technical department and then with the under-17s and under-23s before assisting the Matildas.—*PTI*

Brazil gets late goal for 2-1 victory over US women

SAN JOSE, 9 APRIL

Amanda Gutierres scored in stoppage time and Brazil defeated the United States 2-1 for the team's first victory over the Americans since 2014. It was the second of two exhibition matches between the teams, meeting for the first time since the United States downed Brazil 1-0 in the gold medal game at last summer's Paris Olympics. Catarina Macario put the U.S. in front just 34 seconds into the match. After Alyssa Thompson raced the ball down the left side, Macario picked it up and got around Brazil goalkeeper Natascha, who was making just her fourth start. It was Macario's 10th goal for the national team. —*PTI*

RCB vs DC: Interesting personal match-ups on cards

Royal Challengers bagged three victories from four games

BENGALURU, 9 APRIL

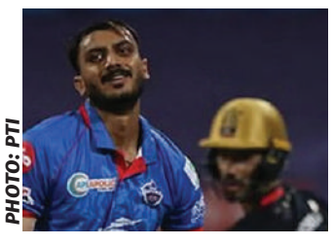


PHOTO: PTI

An intriguing battle is on the cards when fearless Royal Challengers Bengaluru and Delhi Capitals clash in an IPL match, where the outcome will be governed by a clutch of intriguing personal match-ups, here on Thursday.

The Capitals have three wins from as many matches, and the Royal Challengers bagged three victories from four games. That record testifies to their excellent shapeshifting ability, according to opponents and conditions.

Royal Challengers have mastered conditions as distinct as Kolkata, Chennai, and Mumbai, and their lone stumble came at home against Gujarat Titans.

It was more to do with a somewhat out-of-character Chinnaswamy pitch taking them by surprise than any sudden erosion in skills.

The RCB will be wiser for that experience against the Delhi side, who have won at varied Visakhapatnam and Chennai tracks.

But the hosts will be a confident group as star batter Virat Kohli made a return to run-making ways after an all too brief blip. If the 22-yard strip here retains its nature from that GT match, then Kohli's form will be crucial for RCB. Kohli vs Starc and Kuldeep The 36-year-old Indian star will have two formidable foes to negate in this match pacer Mitchell Starc and left-arm wrist spinner Kuldeep Yadav.Kohli has an edge over Starc in T20s as he has scored 72 runs off 31 balls, but the Aussie is in fine fettle this season, taking nine wickets from three matches at an average of 11. —*PTI*

RCB VS DC

HEAD TO HEAD	
PLAYED:	31
RCB Won:	19
DC Won:	11
NO RESULT	1

RCB vs DC Match starts at **7.30 pm IST**

> **Axar Patel's captaincy style puts the players at ease instantly and has also played a massive role in Delhi Capitals' blazing start**
>
> -Matthew Mott, DC assistant coach

> **We batted a bit better, but it's been a frustrating season for CSK, relieved to see CSK top-order producing some runs**
>
> -Stephen Fleming, Head coach

Batting is never about ego: Virat Kohli

NEW DELHI, 9 APRIL

Champion cricketer Virat Kohli said curbing the ego and playing as per the demands of a match situation form the core principle of his batting.

One of the most successful batters of the modern era, Kohli, recently flew past another milestone while becoming the first Indian player to score 13000 runs in T20s. "It's (batting) never about ego. It was never about trying to overshadow anyone. It's always been about understanding the game situation, and that's something I've always taken pride in. I want to play according to what the situation demands," Kohli told JioHotstar.

"If I were in rhythm, in the flow of the game, I naturally took the initiative. If someone else was better placed to take the lead, they would do it," he added.

Kohli is the highest run-getter in the IPL with 8168 runs from 256 matches with eight hundreds, the most by any batter. The 36-year-old said he decoded the demands of the format from the 2011 edition onwards. "In my first three years with Royal Challengers Bengaluru, I didn't get many opportunities to bat in the top order.

I was usually sent lower down. So, I wasn't able to crack the IPL in a big way. —*PTI*

Virat Kohli

MONTE-CARLO MASTERS

Novak Djokovic crashes out in opening match

BRISBANE, 7 DEC

Alejandro Tabilo

Novak Djokovic crashed out of the Monte Carlo Masters in his opening match of the clay-court season as Alejandro Tabilo made it two successive wins against the 24-time Grand Slam champion.

Djokovic had won 10 consecutive matches on clay stretching back to last season's French Open and Olympics, where the Serbian won gold at Roland Garros, but he fell to a 6-3, 6-4 defeat. Chilean left-hander Tabilo, ranked 32 in the world, also defeated the 37-year-old Djokovic on clay at last year's Italian Open in Rome and has now won both meetings against the former World No. 1.

Alcaraz's stylish comeback seals maiden win

Carlos Alcaraz swiftly shook off a sluggish start on Wednesday to record his first-ever win at the Rolex Monte-Carlo Masters.

The 21-year-old showcased his strategic brilliance in a 3-6, 6-0, 6-1 victory over Francisco Cerundolo to reach the third round at the ATP Masters 1000 event. Alcaraz's shift to a more aggressive return position between the opening two sets, which accounted for a 44 per cent increase in first-serve returns landed, was instrumental in his one-hour, 37-minute comeback.

Rublev defeats Monfils; Fils, Musetti advance

Former champion Andrey Rublev snapped a three-match losing streak on Wednesday at the Rolex Monte-Carlo Masters, where he overcame Frenchman Gael Monfils to reach the third round.

Rublev lifted his 17th tour-level title in Doha in February but struggled to find his best level in recent weeks, losing early in Indian Wells and Miami. However, he looked sharp throughout his one-hour, 44-minute meeting with Monfils, hammering 22 winners en route to a 6-4, 7-6(2) win. —*PTI*

Vijayveer fetches India's 4th gold at shooting WC

BUENOS AIRES, 9 APRIL

Paris Olympian Vijayveer Sidhu fetched India its fourth gold medal at the ISSF World Cup after he emerged victorious in the men's 25m rapid-fire pistol event here.

Indian shooters Rudrankksh Patil and Arya Borse combined to win the silver medal in the 10m air rifle mixed team event at the ISSF World Cup here on Wednesday.

Vijayveer shot 29 in a thrilling but low-scoring final to get the better of experienced Italian Riccardo Mazzatti, who was left one short after the eight series of five rapid-fire shots each. Chinese teenager Yang Yuhao won bronze. "I have played so many past finals with Gurpreet sir, Anish, and others previously in the nationals, trials, etc, and have performed well," Vijayveer said after the final on Tuesday. "So today I told myself that I had to do what I do there. Which is that I have to feel that I own the place like I do in Delhi. Just do the same things, but more importantly, feel the same way.

"I just wanted to control what I can control, and it worked. I am happy that this goal was a barrier and now it has been broken down. —*PTI*

Ju takes lead with a comfortable win in Game 5

PARIS, 9 APRIL

In the ongoing FIDE Women's World Chess Championship, Ju Wenjun won the fifth game against fellow GM Tan Zhongyi to attain an overall lead of 3-2.

The 59-move duel started with a King's Pawn opening by Ju, who dominated the game from the start. Even though she seemed to be in some trouble right after Move 30, when Tan had both her queen and rook on the attack against the King, Ju navigated with ease, employing tight defensive moves with her bishop.

Tan's bold opening strategy misfired at first, but she was quick to turn the tables with aggressive play, pushing her pawn into the deep end, but ultimately losing it. From then on, it was pretty straightforward for Ju. —*PTI*

BADMINTON ASIA CHAMPIONSHIPS

Prannoy makes early exit

NINGBO, 9 APRIL

Top Indian shuttler HS Prannoy made an early exit from the Badminton Asia Championships as he lost to Zu Guang Lu of China in the men's singles opening round here on Wednesday.

Prannoy, who hasn't been at his best since suffering a bout of Chikengunya, lost to his Chinese opponent 16-21, 21-1,2, 11-21 in a round of 32 match that lasted one hour and eight minutes.

Kiran George, however, made it to the pre-quarterfinals with a 21-16, 21-8 win over Dmitriy Panarin of Kazakhstan in 35 minutes.

In women's singles, Aakarshi Kashyap and Anupama Upadhyaya lost their respective matches to crash out of the tournament.

While Aakarshi lost to world number three Han Yue of China 13-21, 7-21 in 31 minutes, Anupama was beaten by world number 13 and eighth seed Ratchanok Intanon of Thailand 13-2,1, 14-21 in 36 minutes. In women's doubles, Priya Konjengbam and Shruti Mishra suffered defeat to Chinese Taipei's Shuo Yun Sung and Chien Hui Yu 11-2, 1 13-21 in 35 minutes.

In men's doubles, the unheralded duo of Hariharan Amsakarunan and Ruban Kumar Rethinasabapathi beat the Sri Lankan pair of Madhuka Dulanjana and Lahiru Weerasinghe 21-3, 21-12 in just 19 minutes in the round of 32. —*PTI*

Indian shuttler HS Prannoy PHOTO: PTI

Diksha, Pranavi among six Indians at the SA Open

CAPE TOWN, 9 APRIL

Fresh from a top-10 finish at the Joburg Open, Diksha Dagar will look to carry her good form into the South African Women's Open, where she will compete with five of her compatriots, here from Thursday.

Diksha has great memories from the tournament, which she won back in 2019 for her first Ladies European Tour title.

Though she has not added to her tally of two titles, it has been a great season for Diksha, who was runner-up at the Lalla Meryem Cup in Morocco and T-8 last week in Joburg.She was also T-11 at the New South Wales open, and the former Women's Pro Golf Tour winner is currently fifth on the LET Order of Merit.India will have a large representation this week as Diksha has five other Indians for company. —*PTI*

Maradona should have been in clinic, not home: Doc

BUENOS AIRES, 9 APRIL

A doctor testified at the trial of seven medical professionals accused of negligence in the death of Diego Maradona that the soccer star should have been admitted to a rehabilitation center rather than taken home following surgery he underwent in 2020.

Maradona, who led Argentina to the World Cup title in 1986, died on 25 November 2020, while undergoing home hospitalization on the outskirts of Buenos Aires. He was 60.

"He should have gone to a rehabilitation clinic, a more protected place for him," Mario Alejandro Schiter, who treated Maradona for two decades, told the court.

"Knowing the patient, I would not have suggested home hospitalization; he was not easy to manage, given my direct knowledge of having treated him at the worst moment of his life," added Schiter, who treated Maradona for a drug addiction. According to the prosecution, the seven professionals charged in the negligence case, a neurosurgeon, a psychiatrist, a psychologist, doctors, and nurses, failed to provide adequate care, which may have led to his death.

Maradona

Schiter said he was a consultant and that he had no decision-making authority, and that the clinic's directors ultimately "came and told me they opted for home hospitalization."

According to some witnesses at the trial, the home where Maradona was taken lacked the necessary medical equipment.

Schiter, who also observed the autopsy on Maradona's body, said, "All the evidence suggests that there was a failure to provide modifiable care, which led to heart failure." —*PTI*

STUNNING PERFORMANCE

Arsenal beat Madrid 3-0 as Rice stuns champions

LONDON, 9 APRIL

Arsenal delivered a stunning performance to defeat Real Madrid 3-0 in one of their most iconic wins at the Emirates Stadium.

The match began with an early error from Jakub Kiwior, allowing Kylian Mbappé to test the Arsenal defence. However, his strike flew over the bar.

Despite that scare, Arsenal settled quickly and began to dominate. They pushed Madrid back with sharp passing and clever movement across the pitch.

Martin Odegaard and Bukayo Saka combined well down the right, while Jurrien Timber's cross almost found Declan Rice, whose header forced Courtois into action.

Gabriel Martinelli pounced on the rebound, but Courtois was equal to it again, producing another top-class save before the break.

Real Madrid threatened briefly but failed to break down Arsenal's solid backline. David Raya stayed alert and saved comfortably when called upon.

The second half saw Arsenal turn up the heat. They kept Madrid penned in, moving the ball with urgency and energy in the final third.

Saka won a free-kick just outside the box thirteen minutes into the half, and Rice stepped up with confidence to curl it past Courtois.

That goal sparked more pressure, and Real Madrid struggled to cope. Arsenal pressed high, winning the ball back quickly whenever they lost it.

Their effort paid off again when Saka was fouled once more. Rice fired in another stunning free-kick to double the lead.

The two free-kick goals made Declan Rice the first player to score two direct free-kick goals in a knockout stage match in the UEFA Champions League.

Five minutes later, Myles Lewis-Skelly set up Mikel Merino, who took his chance with a lovely curling effort to seal the win.

The visitors offered no response. Arsenal looked sharper, hungrier, and more organised from start to finish. Mikel Arteta was visibly proud of the team's display. —*PTI*

Declan Rice

Kane misses, Frattesi scores as Inter beats Bayern 2-1

MUNICH, 9 APRIL

Inter Milan's treble chances are still very much on after it won 2-1 at Bayern Munich in the first leg of the Champions League quarterfinals to inflict the German team's first home defeat in the competition in almost exactly four years.

Lautaro Martinez scored in the first half, shortly after Harry Kane had hit the woodwork for Bayern in an uncharacteristic miss that had the England forward clutching his face in disbelief.

Substitute Thomas Muller, who announced on Saturday that he was leaving the German club at the end of the season, appeared to have rescued a 1-1 draw for Bayern with the equalizer five minutes from time, but Davide Frattesi scored the winner three minutes later.

"Tonight wasn't a walk in the park, and we weren't expecting one," Müller told broadcaster Prime Video. "We had a fair few chances, but unfortunately, the last counter makes it 2-1. "(Or) else it's 1-1, a good fightback, and the Müller story would have played out. I'll have to complain to Inter." —*PTI*

Harry Kane